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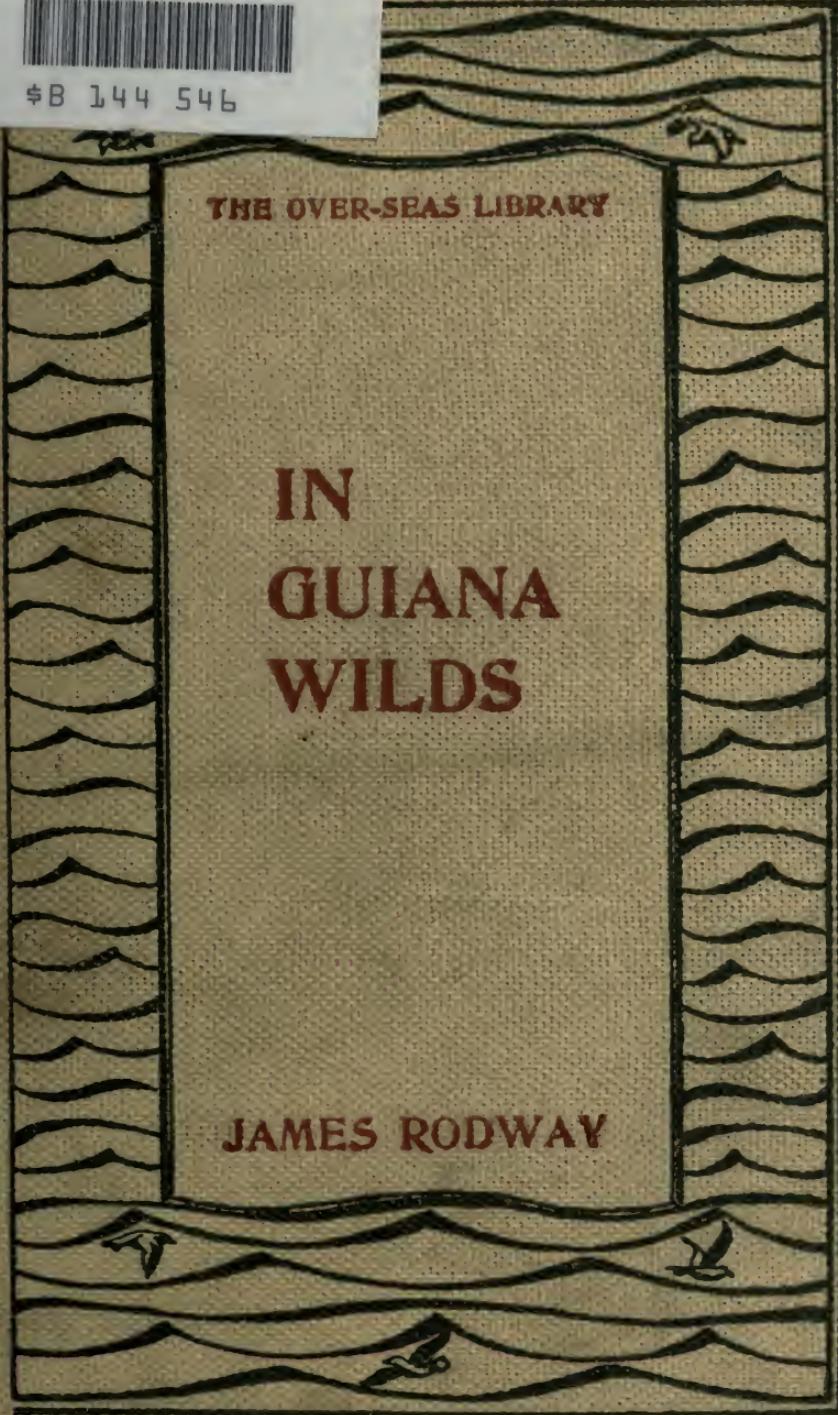


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THE OVER-SEAS LIBRARY

IN
GUIANA
WILDS

JAMES RODWAY





"THE OVE

Where are the "Ends of the Empire"? and
which are the Over-Seas? At "the Ends" of one

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by D.H. bookplate on back cover makes it living to the rest of the world. And the artist is generally absent! In the case of the English in India, ten years ago, while the literature of information was plentiful, the artist was absent; Mr. Kipling arrived and discovered modern India to





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the English imagination. And to-day, in the midst of a general movement for Empire expansion, with talk of Federation, Jingoism, and with the doing of real work, the artists in literature are generally absent, the artists who should reveal the tendencies, the hidden strength and weakness, the capacities of the new communities.

The aim of "*The Over-Seas Library*" is purely experimental. It proposes to print literature from any quarter that deals with the actual life of the English outside England, whether of Colonial life or the life of English emigrants, travellers, traders, officers, over-seas, among foreign and native races, black or white. Pictures of life in the American States will not necessarily be excluded.

"*The Over-Seas Library*" makes no pretence at Imperial drum-beating, or putting English before Colonial opinion. It aims, instead, at getting the atmosphere and outlook of the new peoples recorded, if such is possible. It aims at being an Interchange between all parts of the Empire without favour, an Interchange of records of the life of the English-speaking peoples, and of the Englishmen beyond seas, however imperfect, fragmentary and modest such records or accounts may be.

The Editor will be glad to receive any MSS. addressed to him, c/o the Publisher.

E. G.

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IN GUIANA WILDS

CHAPTER I

ON THE ETAROONIE

“TAKE the dug-out if you like, but don’t blame me if she gives you a soaking. She is cranky, and the tide will soon be falling. Besides, you can’t swim.”

“Now, don’t make a row, Bunting. If you won’t lend me the canoe, say so and be done.”

Well, then, do as you like, Gordon, but I’ve warned you. Much better wait till Chloe comes back from the shop, and have the bateau; she won’t be long.”

The two speakers were standing in front of a troolie hut, surrounded by fruit trees and backed by the interminable forest. Before them lay the dark brown waters of the Etaroonie creek, on the margin of which, moored to a breadfruit-tree, floated the tiny dug-out in question. The tide was at its fullest,

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and as it flowed up the river Demerara the waters of the Etaroonie were dammed back, as it were, and driven lazily towards the bend which cut off from view everything but a great pile of trees and creepers.

But Gordon knew that this was the way to the primeval forest, and he was eager to begin exploring at once. True, he had never handled a paddle until yesterday, when he came up from Georgetown with Theophilus Bunting ; but what of that? It was easy enough, and besides, when would his host's daughter be back? In Demerara "not long" meant anything from half an hour to a whole morning.

All Bunting's protests were unavailing. Gordon got into the boat with difficulty, and pushed out into the stream, the dug-out rocking from side to side, but just keeping from sinking under water. The young dry-goods clerk found its management rather difficult, but with the boviander looking smilingly at his efforts he bit his lips and applied himself to the work of steering.

The backward current took him round the first bend, and at once he was entranced with

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the wild beauty of the scene. Overhead the trees of the forest met, and below there were grouped palms, tree-ferns, and marantas everywhere festooned with vines and epiphytes. He let his eyes feast upon one picture after another as the sluggish backwater carried him farther and farther without exertion on his part, and he began to feel glad that he had not waited for Chloe. It was good to be here, away from all the worries of the store, the abuse from negro women, the humbugging of coolies, and the difficulties of pleasing the white ladies of Georgetown. If his holiday was going to be as pleasant for the whole week, how splendid it would be! Why, he could remain here for ever, idly floating, and drinking in this pleasant reek of the forest.

An hour passed during which the canoe had floated about half a mile, now and again pushing her head into the thorny palms or bushes on either side, but otherwise giving no trouble. Presently, however, as the tide turned at the mouth of the creek, she began to retrace her course, with the result that Gordon had much ado to keep from drifting backwards. Now he

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understood Bunting's warning, for all his exertions failed to keep her straight. Now the dug-out turned quite round, and now his back was pierced by the needles of the bactris, and his head grazed by the formidable hooks which hung from the horrid desmoncus.

The current ran more and more swiftly, but Gordon would not give up. To be carried down past the hut, and to hear the boviander call out, "I told you so!" No. If Chloe could manage it, why not he? His self-conceit, however, was now beginning to ooze from him, as the perspiration flowed down his face. For the canoe rocked most alarmingly, letting a little water flow over the edge, and bumping against a log which lay in mid-stream. He tugged with the paddle, but the craft seemed to know that she was in the hands of a novice. His strokes made her turn half round, but the current was too strong, and in a few moments her head was pointing anywhere but up-stream. He pushed her off from among the thorns on one bank only to find them scratching the back of his neck on the other.

Down the stream the canoe floated, broadside

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on, her occupant at last giving up the struggle, for the thorns and creepers gave him as much work as he could do by ducking or leaning to either side to avoid them. Suddenly the canoe was checked by the branch of a submerged tree—it leaned—water poured over one side, and it settled down.

The banks were quite close, but Gordon saw in a flash there was no possibility of landing in such a thicket even if he could have crossed the few yards of rushing water. Above his head hung a trailing vine—a bignonia with magnificent golden blossoms. As the canoe slipped from beneath him, he grasped the vine, and immediately found himself in the water up to the armpits.

By this time the creek was running with the force of a rapid, and he felt as if something were pulling at his legs. Instinctively he cried out "Help!" and then remembering the bush cry which he had heard, almost screamed "Hoo-hoo-hoo!"

But who was there to help him? Bunting's hut was half a mile away, and even if he heard his cries, there was no boat until Miss Chloe

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came from the shop. Had she come yet? This was the point, for if he let himself float down-stream, they could not get at him without a craft.

His arms ached, ants bit his fingers, his legs were sucked along by the current like one of those submerged weeds which grow in running streams. He remembered the stories of water-mamas, and how they drew swimmers down into their haunts beneath the waters. Then there were the perai, the fish which in some rivers snatch pieces of flesh from people who come within their reach. Now he shouted afresh as the tugging became stronger, and broke out again suddenly when a floating leaf tickled his legs.

Soon his body and limbs felt dull and heavy, but his mind became all the more active. A perfect panorama from his early life passed quickly before him ; the views almost seemed to be present. There was the house in Glasgow which he knew so well, and the little garden behind where he had so often played. His mother, elder brother, and sisters seemed to be again discussing his engagement in Demerara

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as they sat round the fire. It was all so ridiculously lifelike in his mind. He remembered his mother saying—

“ Allan, my son, do not forget your kirk ; I hear they have a good minister at St. Andrew’s, Georgetown.”

Then his elder brother Watty spoke—

“ Now, Allan, don’t follow the example of the young men out there ; I hear they are very immoral.”

Then came his sister’s voices telling him to take care of his health and not to go into the bush among the snakes and wild beasts.

Now his mind wandered to his position and the probability of Miss Chloe having yet arrived. Again he shouted, but his voice had become weaker.

Presently the vine began to loosen its hold on the tree, and he sunk farther down into the dark water, which began to lave his face. Then a great bush came floating down-stream. It caught him in its tangle, his hands relaxed their hold, and in a moment his head was under water ; he lost his senses ; he was floating down towards the Demerara river.

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He woke to find himself lying on the bed in the troolie hut, with Miss Chloe Bunting leaning over him, trying to restore warmth to his chilled fingers. He shivered, notwithstanding that it was midday and in the tropics. His limbs were racked with pain for a few minutes, but presently a sweet languor came over him. Through the dim haze which clouded his eyes he seemed to see a handsome girl (or an angel) moving about the room for a little while, and then came a dreamless, refreshing sleep.

While Gordon is sleeping let us take a look at this primitive home and its inhabitants. A century before the spot was in front of a sugar plantation, and a few old fruit trees still indicated that some care had been taken of the place. How it came into the hands of Theophilus Bunting was a question which he himself could hardly answer. No doubt he was descended from the former owner, but to trace this descent through his Dutch, English, Indian, and negro ancestors would be virtually impossible. His wife was a pure Arawak, a quiet little woman, whose presence in the hut was scarcely felt.

Like most bovianders, Bunting was a shift-

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less kind of individual, who managed to live without doing much work. Now and again he did a little wood-cutting, the proceeds of which gave him a drunken spree when he went to Georgetown, but almost the whole burden of housekeeping fell upon his Indian wife. She, with the casual help of her daughter Chloe, cultivated a field of cassava and some other vegetables, to flavour which now and again her husband brought the results of a day's hunting or fishing.

Chloe Bunting—or, as she had been christened, Chloe Christina Adelaide Louisa—was undoubtedly handsome, notwithstanding the trace of negro blood she inherited from her father. Of a warm brownish complexion, she contrasted favourably with the white women of Demerara, who generally look sickly pale. Let alone by fashion her body was well developed; she could paddle, swim, fish, shoot, and use the hoe and cutlass in the provision ground. Not yet seventeen, she was robustly made, as Allan had noticed when he arrived at the hut the previous afternoon.

Allan Gordon was a new arrival at Hickson's

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dry-goods store in Georgetown. His cheeks had lost their first freshness and were beginning to pale, but he was handsome and young.

A certain course of science lectures and many readings of Waterton's "Wanderings" had set firm in his mind a plan to visit the tropics. Chancing on a Glasgow advertisement for a clerk to go out to Demerara, he applied at once, and thought himself very fortunate when Hickson's agent wrote that his application had been accepted. Now, he thought, his dreams were going to come true ; he would see something of the tropical world, negroes in the cane-field, and Indians in the forest. His mother was frightened when she heard he was going to Demerara, the land of yellow fever, caymans, and great serpents. A West Indian minister on his furlough, however, dispelled her fears of disease and danger in some respect, but he hinted that a young man was exposed to many temptations in the city of Georgetown.

However, Allan would not listen to any of these objections, booked his passage, and arrived, and took his place as one of Hickson's

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clerks. But instead of opportunities of visiting the forest he had to settle down to the drudgery of attending to the store, beset by women the like of whom he had hitherto never seen. The East Indians were interesting, as were also the Chinese, but the dressy negro woman was awful. Two young fellows who came out in the same steamer with him were so shocked at the rudeness and insults they got all day long that, at the risk of a breach of contract prosecution, they fled the store in a few weeks. Allan, however, hoped soon to get opportunities for a trip to the bush, and therefore kept on. Now and then he saw a party of Indians, or "Bucks," as they were called, and sometimes met a boviander with whom he could chat about hunting and fishing on the rivers.

One of these bovianders was Theophilus Bunting, who, in town, used to come shopping for his daughter Chloe. Many a little chat the two had in the store, with the ending that on his first holiday the young Scotchman found himself among the people living "'bov yander" on the Etaroonie.

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He had arrived too late in the afternoon to do more than look round the troolie hut, but even here he was struck with the wild rankness of the vegetation. The fruit trees were covered with scrambling creepers and often infested with vegetable parasites. The inevitable calabash-tree was there, and on it grew two or three orchids which had been placed there by Miss Chloe; there were also half a dozen boxes containing such ornamental plants as crotons and dracænas; all the rest was jungle.

The home of the boviander was wanting in many comforts, yet everything really needed for a tropical climate was there. Protection from sun and rain, and uprights for attaching the hammock-ropes were given by the troolie thatch and the posts of the shed; what more did they want? However, for the sake of privacy, a partition of troolie thatch screened off about one-third of the dwelling, and here Miss Chloe had a real bedstead, a packing-case for a dressing-table, and even a small looking-glass.

In this little apartment Allan found himself

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when he woke very early in the morning after his misadventure. At first he hardly knew where he was, but suddenly came the remembrance of the swirling water which had closed over his head. He heard some one moving about behind the partition, and presently Miss Chloe came in with a cup of steaming coffee and a cake of cassava bread.

She smiled as his questioning eyes met hers, but would not stay to tell him how he had been rescued. Simply pointing to his dry clothes she left him to dress as soon as he had drunk his coffee.

Feeling fit and quite himself again, Allan came out and faced the family and all the congratulations on his narrow escape—all but the mother's, for the Indian woman said nothing. But Bunting was to the fore, smiling, shaking his finger, and saying—

“ Ha ! ha ! You young Buckras think we bovianders foolish for true when we come to town, but in the bush where are you ? Next time you won't go out without one of us. Chloe picked you up at the mouth of the creek or you would have been feeding the sharks by this time.”

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Allan looked gratefully at Miss Chloe.

"Then I have to thank Miss Bunting," he said, "for saving my life; however did she do it?"

"Don't say anything about that," — Miss Chloe beamed at him — "I only dragged you into my bateau."

Allan looked at the little craft which lay moored within a few yards, and thought of his difficulties with the canoe. True, the bateau was not quite so cranky as the dug-out, but how a young girl could have dragged his senseless body from the water without upsetting it was a problem. As he thought of the canoe he also remembered that through his foolishness it had sunk, and, as he supposed, had been lost.

"Oh, Miss Bunting!" he said, in a confused, apologetic way, "your dug-out is lost through my idiocy."

Miss Chloe laughed and pointed to the bread-fruit tree, where, sure enough, the impudent little dug-out floated uninjured.

"Father got it up at low water; let me show you what I can do with it."

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So saying, the girl took up her own paddle, and in a few moments was moving up and down the creek and on the river as if she and the canoe were one.

When she came back, glowing from her little bit of exertion, she asked Allan if he still wished to take "a walk" up the creek.

He smiled at the idea of walking on the water, but as the expression was a common one on the Demerara river he said nothing but that he was ready to go anywhere as long as he had some one with him that knew how to manage the craft.

With this he looked at Chloe in a way that said, "If you come," and she, seeming to understand, replied, "If father cannot go, I will take you."

CHAPTER II

IN THE FOREST

A FLOCK of parrots were screaming overhead, and several toucans barked from the tops of the high moras, as, after morning coffee, Allan and Chloe embarked for their "walk" on the creek. The tide was running up and driving back the dark waters, so that paddling was not difficult. Mr. Bunting had promised to take Allan into the forest, but from a sudden difficulty with one of his wood-cutters he was obliged to let his daughter take his place. There was no question of propriety ; Chloe was quite able to take care of herself and the visitor as well.

The morning was delightfully cool. A heavy dew had fallen, and the marantas and other large-leaved plants were covered with films of water, ready to drench the unwary if they brushed against them in passing. As the

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foliage rose to greet the sun great drops slid off, to fall into the bateau. Everything was fresh and sweet, and the reek of the forest was toned down for a few hours.

Allan took up a paddle and began to imitate his companion, but the little craft rocked so much that Chloe asked him to give up. This was her own bateau, she said, and she could easily manage it alone. If he tried to paddle they would be carried among the "Comawarrie pimplers."

Allan gazed in the direction to which she pointed and shuddered at the sight of a triply-armed clump of palms, the needles of which were five or six inches long. Chloe gave them a wide berth, and kept well in the middle of the stream, by which she also avoided the hooks of the desmoncus which were hung out as if to catch the unwary.

As the bateau moved round one bend after another the most lovely groups of palms, tree-ferns, and festooned trees met their gaze. Allan could do nothing but feast his eyes; it was a revelation—a fairyland. Save for the distant note of some bird, or the weird howl-

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ing of the “baboon,” not a sound could be heard. Now and again a beautiful blue morpho butterfly rose and fell as it crossed the creek, or a few frightened bats fluttered from a hollow tree, but otherwise there was not a sign of life.

Everything was new; everything beautiful and grand. The size of the trees, the contrasts of the foliage, and the magnificence of the flowers struck Allan with amazement. The branches met so far above his head that he could hardly distinguish those of one tree from those of its neighbour—all were interlocked to form one immense arcade. Now and again a trunk leaned over the creek, and they had to crouch down; everywhere were long cords dangling from the rosettes of philodendrums, which had to be waved aside. A fallen tree could only be passed by their getting on the trunk and dragging the little craft over; here Allan could see the advantage of a light bateau.

On and on they went, taking no heed of time. Chloe would not admit that she was tired; in fact she had often gone quite to the

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head of the creek, where some of her Indian relatives lived, without feeling fatigued. She paddled in that easy manner so common among the bovianders, not so silently as the Indian, but without the noisy bumping of the boatmen who live nearer the mouth of the river. At first Allan had asked one question after another about the trees and flowers, but as they seemed endless in their variety, at last he gave himself up to the influence of his surroundings. No wonder, he thought, that the Indian is so quiet ; the glamour of the forest is over him.

Soon the series of moving pictures became almost too much for his eyes ; they were tired, and refused to be strained any longer. Allan then gave himself up to the blissful feeling of resting them ; yet at the same time he almost wished that he might float on like this for ever. To experience such pleasure was worth all the troubles and difficulties of life ; it was good to be there.

Chloe began to sing “Pull for the shore, sailor,” with a voice that re-echoed from the depths of the forest and the canopy above. Allan started from his reverie and looked

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over his shoulder. Chloe's face glowed with the exercise of paddling, her bosom throbbed, and the muscles of her bare arms stood forth like those of an athlete. He admired the graceful way in which she kept time to her song. Here was no stiff wooden figure made up of corset and wrappings, but a woman of flesh and blood, and not afraid of it. He would like to have taken his seat beside her, but the tiny bateau could only carry one behind the other. He dared not move, for when he did so it rocked from side to side as if about to turn over.

Chloe sat as if she and the craft were one ; she knew what it could do, and it seemed almost as if it in turn knew her as a mistress. Allan, on the contrary, began to feel cramped from remaining so long in one position ; he wanted to stretch his legs. Although charmed with the scenery of the creek, he yet wanted to go into the forest.

Chloe said they might land at the first opening ; here the bank of vegetation was too dense. To clear a pathway through this tangle would have been heavy work for a strong man,

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and would require a long time. A little farther on was a woodcutter's path ; there they would have no trouble.

Arrived at the opening, Chloe ran the bateau ashore, fastened it to a tree, and helped Allan to land. He wanted to play the cavalier by handing her out, but she was too quick for him. Then they wandered through the almost obliterated track, the girl at every step making Allan feel that this was her home and not his.

Near the creek the ground was boggy, and they could only save themselves from floundering in the oozy pegass by skipping from one rotten stick to another. Once it had been a corduroy road for hauling timber ; now only one or two of the harder logs remained. Here the girl had to help the man, who hardly knew how to move over such slippery places.

However, they got away from the low ground in a few minutes, and came to the foot of a sandhill, from whence trickled many little streams, which went to form the morass over which they had just passed. Here they came upon one of the prettiest of forest scenes

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—a natural fernery. Clumps of graceful tree-ferns rose to a height of twenty feet; below and around them a hundred smaller species clothed the ever-moist sandbank. The membranous kinds varied in size from tiny heart-shaped films half an inch in diameter to large feathery species two feet high. They formed cushions and rosettes at the bases of the tree-ferns, or crept up their stems, putting forth delicate fronds as if to embellish them. Here also Allan found his first orchid, a *Brassia*, a sprig of which he gathered and handed to Chloe, who pinned it in her bosom.

Even Chloe was pleased with the beauty. She made a cup of a maranta leaf, and dipped it full of cool water from one of the springs. Allan thought he had never tasted anything so delicious. He suddenly found himself very thirsty, and would have kissed the hand that gave him the nectar had he dared. If only there had been a place where they could sit down he would like to stay to watch the forest. Nothing he had seen in conservatories at home could be compared with

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this, but here hardly a human being ever came—certainly none that could appreciate its loveliness.

The great drawback was the reeking moisture; this prevented them from lingering. Chloe went forward up the hill, her cutlass in hand to clear away some of the young saplings and creepers, which appeared to be trying their level best to close up the path. Here again Allan felt his utter uselessness as compared with the girl. She could cut her way through the forest, and he was forced to admire the manner in which she did it. Once he asked her to let him try his hand with the sharp instrument, but he was soon obliged to give up. Chloe gave one cut and the obstruction fell; Allan chopped and chopped again at a bush rope, but it only bent for a moment. He handed back the cutlass with an apologetic smile and a confession of ignorance. How could he be expected to become an accomplished bushman all at once? His companion certainly did not want his help; for she had so often wandered about in the forest that the cutlass was quite familiar—she took it up as

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a fine lady does her fan, but for use rather than ornament.

The trees on the slope were not very large, but they grew so close together that the thicket was particularly dense. The dim twilight was perpetual ; not a single ray of the burning sun could reach the ground ; therefore no plants grew either in the rich brown humus or on the tree-trunks. How steamy it was ! Sweat oozed from every pore of Allan's body.

On and on they went for about a mile, when a glow of sunlight appeared at the end of the bush path, like that which comes at the exit of a tunnel. Almost relieved, they greeted it as a friend, and presently enjoyed the contrast as they entered a little clearing. Here was an old palm-thatched shed, which had been used a year or two before by the woodcutters, but which was now fast going to ruin. However, it afforded a shelter from the burning sun, which very soon drove them under its broken and decaying roof.

Chloe told her companion that long ago this clearing had been the home of her grandfather,

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the Arawak chief. He had been one of the last of the commissioned Indian captains on the Demerara River, and had been treated with respect by most of the bovianders. The benab had long fallen to pieces before the woodcutters built this little shed ; but the clearing still remained to show that the red man had once lived here. Round about were clumps of caladiums and belladonna lilies, monster thickets of silk grass, and a bed of wild canes. That glowing crimson caladium was a beena, used to insure success in hunting ; yonder pretty bed of lilies, which might, Allan thought, have graced any flower-garden, was grown for the same purpose. The silk grass provided strings for the bow, and the wild canes made beautiful arrow-shafts.

The chief had died here, and had been buried in the sand ; and then the settlement was deserted. Somewhere under the lilies and caladiums lay a few bones of the man who once rubbed the acrid roots of these beenas into cuts on his breast or arm before going out to encounter the jaguar. His family had all departed, but the plants remained, and

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would indicate his former presence until the clearing was again overgrown by the forest.

Round the margin several fine cocorite palms were growing, and under them, in advance of the forest, great beds of pineapples. Chloe looked for fruit, and was fortunate enough to find one or two that were ripe. It was a find! Here was no water, and they had not encumbered themselves with a supply of provisions; the pineapples were meat and drink at the same time.

In the shed was an old barbecue, a sort of gridiron made of sticks, used for smoking meat and also as a bedstead on occasion. It was uncomfortable and uneven, but Allan and Chloe thoroughly enjoyed their feast and the rest after their hot walk.

But Allan wished to see the Mourie, of which Chloe had told him, and soon they again took to the path through the forest. After walking a little way the trees became thinner and more stunted, and suddenly they came out into the open. A glittering white expanse of sand lay before them, quite dazzling to the eye. If it was steamy hot in the forest, here it was

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furnace-like. Allan felt the burning sand through the soles of his boots, and he could see the air vibrating as it does above molten metal. No one could bear such intense heat and live ; Chloe said they must come early in the morning if they wished to explore the place. Allan could only see that the clumps of low bushes here and there bore yellow flowers, which glowed like fire amidst their hard leaves, and then was glad to again enter the forest.

They hurried back to the shed, and in a few minutes were refreshing themselves with another pineapple.

CHAPTER III

BENIGHTED

IN the tropics every animal rests during the hottest part of the day, and man follows their example by enjoying a *siesta*. Chloe generally took a nap in her hammock for an hour or two ; but owing to her forest excursion she intended to do without it for one day. The time had already passed, but she had not felt tired until the intense heat of the Mourie had affected her ; now that she was seated on the barbecue a languid feeling came over her, and she nodded. There was no particular necessity for returning at once ; and when her head drooped and she fell asleep resting against one of the posts, Allan did not care to disturb her. In some things she was like a child ; she could sleep under almost any circumstances.

Allan felt a similar languor stealing over

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him ; and although the bare sticks were not a soft couch, something like what he had felt in church on a hot summer's day made him nod. At first his thoughts wandered to the journey up the creek and the walk through the forest. Then came memories of what he had read as a boy : the ideal Indian and the forest of Cooper and Mayne Reid. He had now seen an Indian woman, and a very pleasant one—the mother of the girl so quietly sleeping beside him. They called her a “buckeen”; how much prettier than the word squaw, which the Indian romancer was so fond of using. And Chloe must be a half-blood. How absurd ! However entertaining the old stories might be, the reality was quite different—delightfully different. One thought followed another until he also lost consciousness.

Four o'clock came, and five also passed, to find the pair still sleeping. Now the birds began to wake up and search for their evening food, but Allan and Chloe were lost to the approach of night. Both had sunk down on the platform of sticks until their shoulders rested against each other. Now and again

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they moved a little as the uneven seat became uncomfortable, but did not wake.

Six o'clock came, and the clearing was no longer light. The sun went down behind the trees, the birds retired, one by one the stars came out, and night fell. The forest was black as pitch, but under the shed Allan and the boviander girl knew nothing of the change. Presently the bats came forth from their lurking-places, the hum of insect-life began, and the goat-sucker went past uttering its weird cry, "Who are you?" "Who—who are you-u?"

Allan woke with a start; he wondered for a moment where he was. Feeling the soft, yielding body of Chloe leaning against him, he realised their position, and cried out—

"Wake up! wake up! It's night! How can we find our way home?"

Chloe was also alarmed. The path through the forest was not easy by day; in the darkness it would be impossible to find it. If they could get to the morass, how could they find the logs? Between them the ooze was deep and treacherous; they might be smothered.

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"Have you any matches, Mr. Gordon?"

Allan was not a smoker; he wished he had been. Without fire, food, or covering from the damp, they were indeed helpless. With matches they might at least have had a campfire to cheer them up, and possibly Chloe could have found some hiawa bushes to make torches. In their absence she could do nothing. The pair hardly dared to move beyond the shed for fear of not finding it again. The stars shone brightly, but there was no moon; it would have been pleasanter if her serene light had silvered the clearing, but she would not have helped them to find their way. Better to remain here in this absurd position than to be lost in the forest, where perhaps even daylight would not help them. If it did not rain they would be fairly comfortable.

"Whatever *will* father say? How very stupid of me to go on sleeping! Oh! Mr. Gordon, to think that I should be such a bother to you!"

Allan soothed her as well as he could by taking the affair lightly. After the first shock he did not think much of it; it was an adven-

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ture—something to tell the Georgetown men when he got back. This long sleep had set him up, and a night in the forest seemed to be a part of the strange day.

Chloe continued to blame herself. Her father would be alarmed. Then there was this man, who had never spent a night in the forest; he was a fresh hand, and might be taken ill. But there were her friends. True, "Mrs. Grundy" is not very important in boviander society, but even here a certain attention was given to propriety. People *would* talk! People *would* make sly remarks when they heard of her spending a whole night in the forest with a white man. Not that such a thing would injure her in any way in their eyes; many of them would have been pleased to be in her place.

But nothing could be done; here they were, and here they must stay until sunrise. Hand in hand they groped about to find another pineapple, which they were lucky enough to get hold of, but not without several scratches from its serrated leaves. Chloe pared off the thick rind with her cutlass as well as she could in the

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darkness, and Allan again felt how utterly useless *he* was. Then they sat down together on the barbecue to spend the long night as best they could.

Never before did a night appear so long. But they were not unhappy now they were facing the inevitable. They were virtually imprisoned, yet it was holy ground. For here Allan's love blossomed, and Chloe had a woman's instinct : she knew more than he did. They were so close that coquetry on her part would aid Allan ! But a boviander's coquetry is soft, warm as the tropics. They nestled against each other, and presently Chloe was chattering as if nothing were the matter. For, after all, it was simply comic ; the only danger was from ants and jiggers.

At first they talked of her father's anxiety when he discovered their absence, and Allan wanted to take all the responsibility. But the girl insisted it was her fault ; it was her business as a guide to save the stranger from this sort of thing. Her father would not be hard on them.

They did not think of sleeping. They had slept in the day, and they must watch out the

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night. They could not even tell the time, for Allan had thought it better not to bring his watch into the damp forest.

Presently Allan's arm stole round the waist of his companion ; and as she did not resent it, he kept it there. Then a certain question came to his lips, although he hardly dared as yet to utter it. To pass the time they sang and told stories, she relating some of the exploits of Anansy, the great spider, who takes the place of "Brer Rabbit" in the negro folklore of Guiana.

Tired of this, they settled down to a confidential chat. Allan spoke of his old home, and she of the relations she had up and down the river, especially of those who were nearest to white. They seemed to have known each other for months instead of only for a few hours. Chloe was neither bashful nor affected ; from her Indian ancestry she had inherited a transparency of mind, which was hardly covered by the light veneer of civilisation. She could not lie in word or deed ; what came into her mind was as quickly upon her tongue. The conventional, which makes women hypocrites,

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was unknown to her Indian mother, by whom she had been brought up.

Allan was young and inexperienced. He could not endure the society of the so-called ladies of Georgetown, who accused the men of odious things and gave them their favours notwithstanding. Here was a child of nature, really truthful ; if he asked her the question, which again pushed itself to the tip of his tongue, she would not be afraid to answer. Nevertheless, it would be taking an advantage, and in honour he felt some hesitation. He must sound her a little, and to do this would have to conform to the trammels of custom.

"And whom are you going to marry, Miss Bunting ?" he said lightly.

"I haven't thought of it at all ; you know I am only sixteen," she said. "The boviander young men are very rough," she added, in a low voice.

Allan's heart began to flutter as she nestled even closer to him. He trembled with joy. Suddenly his courage came ; he clasped her, his face touched hers, and their lips met in a long kiss.

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She was not offended ; her love awoke in response to his. The dark forest outside and the darkness in the hut became delicious. What cared they if they remained here for ever ?

As the small hours of the morning arrived the air became damp and chilly. Allan wanted to stretch his limbs a little, but the heavy dew was soaking if he ventured outside, and the girl's light dress would be drenched. This is the time when the glow and heat of a camp-fire is comforting—the only period that makes the tropical man feel inclined to shiver. Allan wanted to take off his coat and cover his companion, but she forbade it. He certainly required it most, as he was new to the forest. At last they lay down together on the barbecue ; they were certainly warmer together. Allan's principles thawed, broke, vanished in the darkness. The night did not recall Watty's moral advice.

Hour after hour passed with the lovers still locked in each other's arms ; at last they fell into a doze, from which they were aroused at dawn by voices and a noise in the doorway. They sat up and rubbed their eyes. Allan felt

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confusedly it was very light. He saw a man entering the hut ; it was Mr. Bunting.

He had spent half the night in search of them by torchlight, and was not altogether pleased when he found them asleep under the shed. However, when Chloe had told her tale he softened ; and when Allan, taking him aside, talked incoherently of marriage his face brightened visibly. He threw off his perturbation : he beamed ; he shook the hand of the young Scotchman, hinting that the wedding should take place very soon.

This hint woke Allan from his pleasant dream, and at every step of the track homeward he grew more serious. Honour demanded that he should marry at once, but the difficulties in the way of setting up a home were enormous. He felt he was walking in a dream. However, everybody was very pleasant, and before he left the Etaroonie Creek the time of the wedding was fixed for the next holiday. He left the Creek, finally prepared to do what he thought right whatever might be the result.

CHAPTER IV

THE WEDDING

DURING the three months before the time arranged for the wedding had arrived, Allan was alternately elevated and depressed. The difficulty of providing a cottage and furniture, and the necessity for his keeping the matter secret, made him feel uncomfortable, but then the thought of having a home instead of a room in the mess-house gave him many a happy moment.

At last the time arrived, and Allan proceeded up the river, arriving at the Etaroonie Creek in the afternoon before the day fixed for the wedding.

Every preparation had been made, and Chloe welcomed her lover at the landing. She had been looking out for the boat, and not until it appeared would she retire to have her dress tried on.

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The house was full of visitors. All Chloe's female cousins and aunts had come, some from ten miles up or down the river, and even the old Indian granny came to see her child. Everybody was pleased, and when she came to show herself in bridal dress and veil they lifted up their heads in admiration. One old negress skipped about as if she were dancing a jig. What a parrot-like chattering went on!

"Eh, eh! She fine fo' true," said one, as she almost went down on her knees to kiss the end of the veil.

The bride looked pleased at this open admiration, and even Allan was carried away by the many compliments she received. There was nothing conventional to-day, but he understood that, on the morrow, things were to be done in style. Mr. Bunting had bought in Georgetown a little book entitled, "Etiquette for Weddings," and Chloe had been reading it. This sort of thing Allan thought might well be dispensed with; he liked people better when they were natural. But the boviander must be somewhat different on such a grand occasion; he gloried in the opportunity of

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showing that he knew a thing or two of society manners. A wedding did not take place every day, and all concerned felt that it must be celebrated in a proper manner. Allan would have protested, but he did not like to give offence ; after all, the fuss would be only for one day.

Next morning they were up betimes, for the little Mission chapel was three miles away and the wedding party could not dress at home. No, they must take everything with them in their bateaux and put on their finery at the house of the catechist and schoolmaster. Every few minutes a canoe or bateau arrived at the landing, crowded with women and piled up with bundles of all shapes.

The weather was fine and they must start before the sun got too high. At last everything was packed, and a procession of ten craft of all sizes went swiftly up the river, the paddlers emulating each other in shouts and songs. Allan and Chloe sat together, unable to avoid listening to the personal remarks continually being made by others of the party. For the boviander cannot whisper, he must

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speak at the top of his voice. When they passed a strange canoe the occupants asked what they were doing and where they were going. On hearing that something so uncommon as a wedding was about to take place some of them changed their course and followed; their business was of little importance, it could wait. Such a ceremony was too rare to be missed, even if the children were waiting at home for the food which these loiterers had come many miles to fetch. They would not miss it for the world. As for themselves, few were married; they could not afford it. Now and again a couple went through the ceremony, after living together for a dozen years or more, and when perhaps the eldest daughter could act as a bridesmaid. Few, however, could save the fifty to a hundred dollars necessary for fine dresses and an elaborate feast. The mere ceremony was nothing without these.

They arrived in good time, crowded into the little cottage of Sampson Peeters, and overflowed into his schoolroom. What a din they kept up, to be sure, as they took off their

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soiled dresses and arrayed themselves in all their finery! And what a trouble they had with their boots, most of which had been specially bought for the occasion. Their feet were hard enough to walk among thorns and prickles; how could they be brought under fashionable subjection? The poor women tugged and strained, panted and groaned, and when they at last came forth could hardly walk. Yet with all that they looked down at their feet with satisfaction and endured the pain like martyrs.

Corsets were another difficulty. Rarely had they worn such things; they were too great a hindrance to paddling and the work of the field. However, they emulated each other in straining these grand deformers as tightly as possible, and in one or two cases burst the strings. As they came forth one by one it could be seen that their waists, like their feet, were giving them excruciating pain. But they smiled through it all and came up to be admired by the men, who perhaps had never seen them in such gay clothes before. Their dark skins glowed red with the exertion and pain, and

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something like a blush could be here and there seen below the natural colour.

What a time they took! As for the bride and her maids, who had a room to themselves, it seemed as if they would never have finished. The hour arrived, but still their door was closed, and it was not until several impatient calls had been made that the party came forth, each one looking over her shoulder to see that her dress fitted. As for Chloe, Allan hardly knew her, she was so smothered with dress and veil, and so obviously hot and uncomfortable. However, they were all ready now, and could proceed to the little chapel, where the black minister awaited them.

The ceremony over, another hour was spent in undressing, but at last the bride and bridegroom were again sitting in the bateau and on their way home.

Arrived at Mr. Bunting's house a feast awaited them. The forest and river had been ransacked and fished to provide such a spread as had never before been seen or even heard of at the Etaroonie Creek. Chloe's Indian relations had made up a special hunting expedition, and

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had brought deer, labba, acourie, parrots, and other bush-fowl, as well as a splendid collection of fish. There were fou-fou soup, pepper-pot, barbecued meat, and piles of oranges, star-apples, sapodillas, mangoes, and pineapples. Then, to crown all, a great wedding-cake had been brought from town, and this was looked upon with admiration by all the women of the company. As for the men, their eyes wandered to a demijohn of rum which stood in one corner and which tickled their nostrils with its inviting odour.

Sampson Peeters was here in all his glory. As the "Master of Ceremonies" he was continually reminding his host of what was "propa." He bowed most effusively to the couple as they came in.

"Mrs. Gordon, I have much pleasure in welcoming you back," he said, and in a stage whisper told her to go and dress for the wedding breakfast. He then informed Allan that he must sit at the head of the table with his bride, and that he, Peeters, would propose the necessary toasts.

At last everything was ready. Those who

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could find room and had on their wedding garments sat at the table ; the crowd did the best they could, either crouching on the floor, or lying down outside under the trees. Plates and knives were scarce, but they were not absolutely needed as long as plantain-leaves and fingers were available.

How they did eat ! With most of them it was indeed a breakfast in the proper sense of the word, for they had eaten nothing as yet for the day. The piles of eatables disappeared so quickly that Allan almost wondered where they had gone. Chloe and her bridesmaids, however, in their uncomfortable finery, did little more than gaze at themselves and each other ; their pleasure was something different from that of their friends.

Dinner over, and the glasses, cups, calabashes, and other vessels charged with wine, brandy, and rum, Peeters got up to propose the toast of "The Bride."

"This is a most auspicious occasion," he said, "the celebration of the nuptials wedding of our handsome cousin, the pride of Etaroonie, and my noble mind cannot but make a few

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magnifying affirmations. It is with a fearful enchanting temerity that I enunciate before this august assemblage, and I sanguinely expect that our friend Mr. Gordon will exculpate me if my language is not surprisingly elegant. I stand on shaky foundations—not shaken altogether by my faults but by contingencies. The curse which lingered for centuries over the sons of Ham has been removed, but it has left behind a silent-like vestige of truth, that on them did rest that curse—some dull sort of quaint stupor or cowardice, producing confusion and fears, and throwing broadcast doubtful conclusions and reflections on the almost already improved, yet limited platforms of their actions. Ladies and gentlemen, a doubtful, trembling temerity is not honourable! To fear is not to honour, nor is honour fear! The days we live in are days of wonderful spiritual light. We are all children of Adam, brought forth beneath the bright lucid reflections of God's shadowed image of happiness, holiness, and immortality."

Here Peeters looked round on the assemblage, who responded with loud cheers and

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shouts, those who could not come in crowding round outside. Fixing his eyes upon the bride he continued : " Words do something act as swords, arrows, ointment, medicine, cordials, castor-oil and senna—balm to our wounded spirits. To our ears and spiritual understandings, the folios of the prayer-book read at the marriage nuptials to-day seem hard to understand. But we can learn this much—that truth in its heavenly purity will reign through heaven and earth, and everlasting unalterable friendship, hallowed in love, never be broken or troubled by mistake or jealousy. The revolution of years and antedating centuries past, with their solemn records borne down upon us as a race and as a people, and pointing our thoughts to past scenes and actions, and lives and deaths of thousands—buried beneath the long-slumbering ashes of their mother earth."

Again a loud burst of applause checked his speech, and the orator beamed on the crowd as he heard some one remark that Peeters was "making a fine speech ; as good as a lawyer's." Allan hardly knew whether he ought to cheer or laugh, but not wishing to be singular he

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cried, “Hear, hear!” while Chloe clapped her little hands together in undisguised admiration. But the speech was not yet concluded, and Peeters went on—

“The planet earth has her changes—her beauties and her fadings—her times of trouble and of comfort—her blessings—her times of war and her times of peace. One of her happiest seasons is when the nuptials of her sons and daughters are celebrated. She sends forth into our midst (sometimes but seldomly) her partly supernatural sons; though perhaps from this fact those particularly choice ones are often looked upon with a somewhat natural sort of interrupting-like jealousy. But we know very well that there are good spirits and bad spirits too—good and bad ministers too—good and bad teachers too—there are a few good white men—and Mr. Gordon is one of them.”

By this time the whole assemblage was standing round with their mouths wide open and their hands uplifted. As Gordon’s name was mentioned their shouts were deafening. “He ought to be in the Court of Policy,” said one; “wouldn’t he floor the Governor?” “Let us

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make him a minister ; he is too good for a schoolmaster," was heard in another direction. Peeters grinned with satisfaction and went on—

"When you cheered, ladies and gentlemen, I was speaking of Mr. Gordon. When his presence enlightens this part of the river we feel sorry that he has not had the advantages of a boviander. But we know he loves the bush—his skin is white, but his blood is red like ours ; and I am sure none of you here to-day will despise him because he is not equal to yourselves. As for Miss Chloe——"

Another deafening cheer, mixed with cries of " May she be happy ! " " Go on, Peeters ! " again checked the orator. He waved his hand and cried, " Long live Mrs. Gordon ! " and the answering shout could be heard on the other side of the river. For two or three minutes the succession of cheers prevented his continuing, but lifting his hand to again command silence he took up the thread of his speech—

" As for Miss Chloe, or I should say Mrs. Gordon, you all know her. Female beauty has its charms, female manliness a noble

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thought to invest the minds of philosophers, warriors, and statesmen, with the conclusion which past majorities, and some present ones, through wrong but advantageous-like calculations, or prophecy often arrived at, and only unknowingly for to hinder the wonder-working of the universal providence. Let me now lead your thoughts to the experiences of certain ones along with our intercourses with friends, as well as foes or strangers, and generally discoverable through the troublesome acts of prejudices of those who know and feel themselves to have originated or sprung up from a comparatively lower social standard than ourselves. It is only on account of this dull-born prejudice that these people will not see that the European is almost as good as the Demerarian. It is perfectly certain that he cannot shoot, fish, or manage a bateau as well as one of our boys. But then, you know, we cannot all have these advantages, and we must not blame people for what they can't help.

“ Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I think you will concatenate with me in wishing Mrs. and Mr. Gordon long life and happiness ; that they

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may have a multitude of children like the patriarch Jacob, and live together like Isaac and Rebecca."

The cheers and bawling were, if possible, louder than before as the orator waved his glass on high, drew his head back, and poured a draught of strong rum down his throat. Fully ten minutes passed before Allan's short reply could be uttered. His words were few and to the point ; but even Chloe felt that her husband was nowhere in comparison with the champion orator. Peeters had prepared his speech some weeks before, written it down, and committed it to memory.

We must draw a veil over the orgie that followed. Fortunately for Allan he wanted to go off by the falling tide, and consequently the pair left before the drinking had gone too far. One little difficulty occurred, however, which made him all the more eager to leave, and nearly led to a quarrel.

As "Master of Ceremonies," Peeters dictated what the bride and bridegroom should do ; he had the book of etiquette by heart.

After the table had been removed the

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wedded pair were assigned to a couch at one end of the room, on which they were supposed to be sitting in state. They must not move on any account ; if anything were wanted Peeters would bring it. This was all very well for a short time, but presently Chloe wished for a glass of water, and simply got up to fetch it. Peeters, who had been drinking freely, was annoyed at this breach of good manners, and when the bride laughed at him, said he would no longer favour them with his presence. Allan told him to do as he liked, but Mr. Bunting tried to mollify him, and it looked as if there was about to be a quarrel. However, Chloe went to change her dress, and this caused a slight diversion, Peeters meanwhile leaving in his bateau and showering abuse on the whole crowd.

No one else took up the quarrel, and when an hour later the pair left for town most of the party were in the happy stage, Allan and Chloe getting away before the fights commenced.

CHAPTER V

“WHEN A MAN’S MARRIED”

ALLAN had hired a little cottage to which he brought his bride late in the evening. He chose the time of their arrival to avoid observation, and to prevent, if possible, the news of his wedding reaching the heads of the firm. His holiday extended to the day following, which gave him an opportunity of showing his darling round their future home.

What a happy day it was! They talked of their night in the forest, and Chloe hid her face on his shoulder as he reminded her of how it had been spent. The cottage was small, but it was embowered in flowering shrubs, and the little gallery was screened from the road by luxuriant festoons of corallita. Chloe was pleased with the little comforts and conveniences which her husband had provided, some of which were quite unknown up the river. A

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little maid-servant looked after the cooking, but they cared little at this time for what was laid upon the table.

Nevertheless, the little dinner was cosy, and the quiet evening, after the servant had gone home, delicious. Allan had brought a few of his books, and he opened them and read one or two favourite things to Chloe—a piece from Longfellow and one from Tennyson. But she went to sleep in the midst of the story of Enoch Arden, and presently he thought they had better go to bed. However, he made plenty of excuses for her inattention; she was weary from the excitement of the last two days, and he could not expect to create a love for poetry and good literature all at once.

Next morning he tore himself away to again perform his duties at the store. He would naturally have preferred a few more days of leisure; but now that he had a home the sordid demands of business were not so irksome as before. The thought of meeting his wife again in the evening enabled him to bear with the rudeness of the black "ladies," and we are afraid made him a little less attentive than

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usual. It would be only for a few hours, and then Chloe would again be clasped in his arms.

When his fellow-clerks inquired how he had enjoyed his trip to the bush, he said nothing of the wedding. This must be kept secret for some time to come, as it might injure his prospects of advancement. Ostensibly he must still live at the mess-house, dine there, and even sleep in his room occasionally. Some of the clerks dined out, and spent their evenings and even nights away pretty often without any remarks being made, but such a stay-at-home as Allan Gordon would have to be a little more circumspect. Nevertheless, there were always the evenings after dinner, and sometimes, on the plea of dining out, the whole time after closing, which took place at five o'clock.

What a delightful home it was! Chloe would come to the door as she heard his footsteps, and greet him with a kiss; then they would talk over the little troubles and difficulties of the day. For the boviander girl found it hard to understand the customs of city life, and felt

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a little uncomfortable in the absence of her bateau, and with the utter impossibility of spending her time in the open air. No doubt she was happy enough when her husband arrived, but there was all the rest of the weary day with nothing to do but brood. She wanted friends and acquaintances, and as yet she had found none. Allan tried to develop in her a taste for reading, and to this end brought her novels, but she went to sleep over them; if he read to her the same thing generally happened, or else she spoiled the effect of some choice passage by asking trivial questions on matters entirely apart from the book.

Hardly a fortnight had passed before she complained of feeling dull. Up the river she could go about everywhere; in town she had only the servant to speak to. Here was a dilemma. Allan could not take her about and introduce her as his wife, and he certainly would not say she was his mistress. It was very hard for her, and if she had known what the neighbours were saying it would have been harder still. They put their own construction

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on the matter. It was a common thing for a young clerk to have his girl living in this way ; and although Allan hardly meant their connection to be considered in an immoral light, his whole behaviour perforce tended to such a result.

At last Chloe said she must have her cousin Euphemia Peeters to live with her ; she could not sleep in the house alone when Allan felt it necessary to occupy his room at the mess-house, and then she wanted company during the day.

Now the trouble began. Chloe was certainly more lively ; but no longer could the pair spend a pleasant evening together. Miss Euphemia was a skeleton at their feast, the third party who is always unwelcome to one of the others. And then this cousin had friends in Georgetown, people of the shabby genteel type, whose antecedents would not bear investigation. There was Mrs. Coudray, a widow who had only been a wife for a few days, after living for many years with different men, the last of whom had married her on his deathbed to salve his conscience. She had three daughters

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bearing their father's names, all of which were different. A visitor, on being introduced to Mrs. Coudray and her daughters, was surprised to hear that one was Miss Vanderkamp, the second Miss McGurdy, and the third Miss Renner. From the fact that Mr. Coudray had married her, the mother became entitled to a small pension, on which the whole family lived after a fashion ; but the amount was so small that the girls were eager to be off on almost any terms. Of course they wanted to get husbands if they could ; otherwise they would have to put up with something different.

Chloe and Euphemia called on this family one afternoon, and the bride was, of course, introduced as Mrs. Gordon. At once there was a little stir ; who was this Mrs. Gordon ? They had heard that one of Hickson's clerks had a girl in Lacy Town, but they did not believe he was married to her. The mother took Euphemia aside and asked her about the matter ; she could hardly believe it until her friend said she had attended the wedding.

" And why does he not go out with her,

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then?" she exclaimed, loud enough for Chloe to hear.

"It is a secret," replied Miss Euphemia, "and I must ask you not to tell any one in town. He doesn't want the Hicksons to know."

"Oh! That's it, is it? Of course I will be as silent as the grave." And she chuckled inwardly as she thought of the interest which this secret would give to her visits for the next week or two.

A few days later most of the gossips in Georgetown knew that Allan Gordon was married to the girl in the little cottage, but every one to whom it was told was pledged to secrecy.

Now that Chloe went out visiting she saw how other women dressed, and, as a matter of course, wished to be in the fashion. Allan must get her this, that, and the other thing; for of course he, being in a dry-goods store, could get them for almost nothing, according to Miss Euphemia.

"If I had a husband in a position like yours I would dress in the height of fashion," she said.

Chloe was led away by this, and began to

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pester Allan to bring her dresses and hats that were quite beyond their means. Unfortunately for him these things could be obtained very easily by any of the clerks ; they simply charged the articles to themselves, when, of course, they were debited against their salaries. If Chloe had a dress, Miss Euphemia must get one too ; they could not have the young woman in their house without doing something for her. Thus the incubus of debt began to grow.

All that had been saved had gone to furnish the little home, leaving only a few dollars to carry the pair on until the end of the month. Chloe was not extravagant in her housekeeping, but she was certainly ignorant of the value of things. With the arrival of her cousin the natural instincts of hospitality began to have free play ; she could not be mean or stingy in presence of the visitor. Allan gave her a certain sum to last the week from one Saturday to another ; by Wednesday it was generally gone, and she wanted more. She and Euphemia could not starve, and Allan commenced to draw upon his salary.

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This drawing system was at that time very common in all the Georgetown stores. Salaries were paid monthly or quarterly, but often when the end of the term arrived the whole amount had been drawn already, and besides, possibly the clerk might be largely indebted for goods. In some places the advances were so great, one way or another, that there was never anything to the young man's credit. Allan, who had hitherto been always entitled to his full salary at the end of the month, now began to follow the custom of the improvident.

This set his fellow-clerks talking. Gordon the immaculate, the young man who was too virtuous for Demerara, was spending a lot of money and having silk dresses charged to him. He had a handsome girl at a cottage in Regent Street, with whom he often spent his evenings ; she was called Mrs. Gordon, but they all knew the value of such a title. Other fellows had girls who let themselves be called Mistress (with the capital). What did they care about the girls' names ? Of course Mrs. Gordon was one of the same class.

Now that Chloe went visiting she began to

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realise her position. Euphemia told her what people said, and that some even doubted her word when in confidence she told them of the marriage. On one occasion Chloe herself had been bound to appeal to her cousin to confirm her assertion, and after all that her female acquaintance shook her head. She knew that Hickson's clerks were virtually prohibited from marrying until their engagements of three years had expired, and could hardly believe that one of them would risk his prospects by doing such a thing.

The young wife saw that her word was doubted and went home angry. In the evening she told Allan she wished she had been dead before she ever saw him.

“What did you bring me to town for, when you knew you could neither acknowledge me as a wife nor even support me properly? I was happy in my father’s house; I had plenty of friends; I wanted for nothing! Here everybody looks down upon me as if I were not respectable.”

“My dear Chloe,” said Allan quietly, “you knew my circumstances, and also knew that I

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explained everything to your father when I first spoke to him of marriage. Perhaps something will turn up shortly ; let us live quietly for a little while."

"No, no!" she cried ; "this sort of life can't go on, and it shan't go on ! People must know that I am your lawful wife. You must take me to church next Sunday, and let everybody see that you are not ashamed of me. I am not ugly ; all I want is a mauve silk dress and a nice hat, to be equal to the best of your fine ladies. Of course you will get them."

Allan tried to soothe her, but all his efforts were useless. If he did not take the course she insisted upon she would come to the store and inform Mr. Hickson. He had not yet got to that stage when he could deny her anything reasonable, and he felt that she was right from her point of view. It was certainly inexpedient under the circumstances, and might bring him into difficulties, but the present state of things was intolerable. He was by no means ashamed of his choice, but would not his employers look upon the marriage as an open defiance ? However, the crisis had

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come ; his wife demanded the recognition to which she was entitled, and he must bear the consequences of his rashness. He even went so far as to increase his debt to the store by giving her the coveted dress and hat ; if they were to be conspicuous, which they certainly would be, then his wife must make an impression.

Truly no handsomer couple were in church that Sunday morning. As they passed up the aisle every one stared, the men with admiration and the women with envy. Chloe held herself up proudly ; she knew she was handsome, and could see that a sensation had been produced.

“Who is that with young Gordon ?” was asked in a dozen pews as they passed, and the only reply was a shake of the head, with perhaps a hint from a woman that she could not be much good. One or two, who had heard of the so-called Mrs. Gordon, thought that they would go to some other church if such people came here.

After service Allan’s fellow-clerks crowded round and were eager for introductions, which, of course, they easily got. The luncheon-table

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at the mess-house was kept in quite a hum of conversation as the news was given to those who had spent the morning in their hammocks. On every side the question was asked, "What will Old Hickson say?" and it was answered by such expressions of opinion as "Gordon has put his foot in it," and "The Governor will give him beans." One hinted that he could not keep a wife like that on his salary, and the cashier said he must look up his account. They could not sufficiently praise Gordon's taste, but at the same time were compelled to condemn his imprudence.

Allan spent the day at their little cottage, and Chloe was particularly kind and loving. Euphemia kept in the background; if she had been away altogether Allan felt that he would be more comfortable. He tried to forget what might be expected on the morrow, but now and again he could not help feeling anxious. Notwithstanding the caresses of his wife his rest was disturbed by dreams.

In one of them he thought they were sitting together in the gallery behind the screen of corallita, and that he felt supremely happy.

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Through the tangled creeper the perfumes of the limonia and the fidele-wood tree were wafted, for it was evening. The flowers were prepared for their nuptials, and he could fully sympathise with them in their efforts to attract the winged creatures that they might render the necessary assistance. He was united to his lovely boviander—his Eve—and they were in Paradise. The light from the sitting-room was reflected upon the leaves and flowers on the trellis, and as he sat with his arm round his wife he instinctively, as it were, saw a scaly head peep out from among the vines. It might be the pretty green lizard, which was so fond of sunning itself there in the day. But no, presently the head was extended too far for it to be that of the harmless reptile. It was a snake, and as its colour could be distinguished, he perceived that it must be the deadly labarria. He watched it, but could neither move nor cry out. Chloe went on chatting those soft nothings which only lovers care to hear, but did not appear to notice the reptile. It began to crawl out of the tangle; it was on the floor and making towards him. He tried to move,

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but was fixed to his seat. Even when the horrid creature coiled round one of his legs he could not stir. Presently its eyes glared into his ; with a sudden dart it plunged its poisonous fangs into his cheek. He sunk down—down—down, as if into some bottomless pit, and as everything round him became pitch dark, a horrid sardonic laugh pierced his ears. And he knew that this came from his wife. He tried to cry out—he seemed to be straining for hours, but his tongue refused to utter a sound. Suddenly, as if the ties were broken, he called “Help !” and woke to find his wife leaning over him and asking what was the matter.

CHAPTER VI

TROUBLE BEGINS

AS Allan appeared at the store next morning he was met by questions from every side.

"Where did you pick up that fine girl? Is she really your wife? Does Old Hickson know?"

Allan gave evasive answers; he was not prepared to discuss his wife with a lot of fellows who had little respect for women in general, much less for "coloured girls."

Presently Mr. Hickson arrived, and after looking over his letters called him into his office.

"Well, Gordon," he said, "I hear you have been getting married?"

Allan bowed his head in assent and said nothing.

"How do you expect to keep a wife on the

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salary you are getting? And a coloured girl, too. Why, you'll be up to your eyes in debt just now."

"I am hoping that you will give me a board allowance, and let me live out of the mess-house; we could manage then."

"If you hope that then you are very unreasonable. You have your agreement, which you signed before coming out, and you well know the amount of your salary, besides board and lodging. You also know our rules, and must see that we cannot make an exception in your case. Your account will be looked into; no overdraft be allowed in future; and remember that I have my eyes on you. You have chosen to defy us, and we shall therefore strictly adhere to the letter of our agreement."

Allan went back to his counter looking rather crestfallen. His account was already overdrawn, and this decision of Mr. Hickson would prevent his receiving any advances until the debt was wiped off. Over a week of the month was left, and during that time no money could be obtained; he was not even sure whether then he would be allowed to draw on the next.

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Whatever would Chloe do? She had already shown that economy was, in her opinion, meanness; her wants must be supplied regardless of consequences.

He met with little sympathy from his fellow-clerks; to them he had never appeared "chummy"; he had put on airs. Sometimes he had even gone so far as to remonstrate with one or two when they drank, gambled, and spent their nights at "dignity" balls. This assumption of superiority prevented his having a single real friend; he could not descend to their level, and they, on their parts, felt no interest in his pursuits. He was so unsociable that he kept his door closed in the evening, and studied as well as he could in such a noisy place, where the thin partitions conducted the sound of drunken orgies to his ears night after night. Latterly he would not subscribe to a raffle or attend a funeral; he was a mean cad.

One or two of the later arrivals, however, who had not yet abandoned their old principles altogether, offered to assist him with loans when they heard that his account had been

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stopped. The nearest to a friend was Johnny Burgin, a hearty young fellow, who suited his behaviour to his company. With the rollicking set he could be as jolly as the best; he could play at every sort of game, sing, strum on the piano and the banjo, and altogether make himself agreeable everywhere. He even read a little when he could get an opportunity, which was not very often, and would on occasion enter Gordon's room and have a pleasant chat. Allan liked him very much; he felt, however, that such a character must soon be ruined in Demerara. Johnny never said no to anything, good, bad, or indifferent; his future depended upon the company he kept; he was and would be the creature of circumstances. His surroundings in Demerara would almost certainly ruin him for life; better that his health should fail and that he be sent back to England.

Burgin, as may be supposed, had little money to his credit, but what he had to spare was as freely offered to Gordon as it would have been subscribed to a drunken spree.

When Allan went home that evening he told Chloe they would have to reduce their house

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expenses to the lowest possible sum, or she would be left to starve.

She was much annoyed, and felt that in the presence of Cousin Euphemia she must assert herself.

"Oh yes, I must starve for all you care ! It won't matter to you, for your meals can always be got at the mess-house ! Why did you bring me to town if you could not keep me ? I shall go back to father to-morrow. I am half starved and naked already ; how can I live on less ? I want a lot of things, and there is my cousin ; I can't be mean, and I won't ! I am not a red-headed Scotchwoman ! "

"My dear," Allan said, in a whisper, "you must let Miss Euphemia go back to her friends ; when we get straight she can come again."

"What ? You want to drive away my only friend ! Euphemia ! Come and hear this. See what it is to have a husband ! First, he spoils my character by letting people think I am not honestly married, and now he wants to starve me ! "

Cousin Euphemia looked daggers at the

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man who proposed to drive her away. She had made herself at home, and intended to stop. She had heard Chloe's threat to go back to her father, but this did not suit her; however, she would have plenty of time to talk to the wife when they were alone together.

"It is no use to talk, Allan," continued Chloe, "I am your wife, and have my rights. Because you thought me a fool you imposed upon me, but you won't do it any more. I have friends now who will see me righted; I am not your mistress, although you said I was."

"What! you never said I was your mistress? Did I not force you to own me as your wife? Did not the clerks at Hickson's put me on a level with the girls some of them were keeping? I want some money and must have it, and I want some clothes. If you don't get what I want I shall credit the things in your name, and you'll have to pay all the same."

What could Allan say? He was not prepared to speak roughly; he still loved her dearly. Yet the change in her behaviour since her cousin's arrival and since she had gone into low society was most distressing to him. The

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docile child, as he thought her, had become a wilful woman. He almost wondered how this could be. The Indian female was so quiet and submissive that surely Chloe's temper did not come from that side. Her obstinacy might be traced to the red man, but not her defiant attitude ; this evidently came from the negro. She had threatened to go back to her father ; let her do so, for although he would miss her greatly, it would be a way out of his difficulties.

Finding that he could say nothing but what gave offence, he left before his usual time and went back to the mess-house. Possibly it would be as well to leave her alone for a few days ; she might come round a little.

The two women went to bed and talked things over. Euphemia persuaded Chloe that if she left her husband he might refuse to support her ; "I will see that you are not imposed upon," she said. Had the wife been alone no doubt she would have given way, but in presence of her cousin, who continually egged her on to demand her rights, she could only be put down by very strong measures,

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which Allan could not possibly adopt. Euphemia was shrewd, and could see where the weak point lay, and then, again, what did it matter to her if the happiness of the young couple was ruined, or even if Allan lost his situation? She could always go back to the Etaroonie Creek, and so could Chloe for that matter. It was only the mean, stingy Scotchman who would suffer; why, a boviander was worth a dozen like him. Up the river a man would give away everything he had, no matter if he starved next day; here in town some people wanted to put up things to-morrow even when they wanted them to-day. They would remain and fight it out; he had brought his wife to town, and had seconded her invitation to Cousin Euphemia; here they would stop for the present at any rate.

During the rest of the week Allan purposely refrained from going to his home. As evening came, however, he had hard work to prevent himself from straying in that direction. On Thursday evening he actually passed the cottage, and was surprised to see it lit up as if for a party. A fiddle was playing, and from

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the loud stamping, which shook the little building, he understood that a dance was in progress.

He would not enter, for he felt that he would be looked upon as an intruder. He did not know the people, and was sorry that his wife had taken up with them without his knowledge. Evidently the opportunity of his absence had been taken to spend a rowdy evening. He was almost ready to weep as he passed on. Parties could not be given without money, and now that none was to be had the whole thing was not only defiant but heartless. He had borrowed the week's house-keeping money from Johnny Burgin, and this was how Chloe spent it.

Next morning, as he stood behind the counter, Chloe and Euphemia entered the store. Allan saw that his wife's lips were firmly set, and although he welcomed her it was with a sensation of impending trouble.

"I want some money; I have nothing to buy dinner with to-day," she said firmly but quietly.

"I haven't a cent to-day, Chloe," he answered,

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"and I don't know where to get anything. What I gave you was intended to last until to-morrow, but even then I can hardly say how a few dollars can be obtained."

"What do you mean by saying you have no money?" she almost screamed. "Do you think I came to town to be starved? Where is Mr. Hickson? Let me go to him!"

Hearing the noise the chief clerk came up and said, "Look here, Gordon! This sort of thing won't do. Get rid of her before the boss comes, or you'll get into a row."

Several of the clerks and one or two customers were looking on. Chloe's mouth was working and her forehead was puckered into folds. She was still handsome, but at the same time appeared devilish. Some one said, "What a vixen!" and a clerk told a porter to look for a policeman.

Allan was really ashamed. He hung his head as the chief clerk gave his warning, but he was so confused that he knew not what to do. He looked at Burgin, who was always ready with his sympathy for everybody, and without a word Johnny put a five-dollar note

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into his hand. With a gasp of relief Allan handed the money to his wife, who sailed out with her head in the air, her brow still wrinkled and her full lips protruding.

After she had gone Allan was so miserable that he could hardly attend to his duties. Whatever would be the result of all this? He could not go on borrowing from Johnny, for he could ill spare what he had just lent. And then, how was the amount to be repaid? If his wife launched out into parties and dancing she might be coming to the store twice a week. Should he run away from the colony? Where could he get the passage money? He would try once more to bring her to reason, and if she still persisted in her course, then—

He called that evening and found her in a better humour. She even came up and kissed him. She would forgive him this time, but he must not bring his mean, stingy ways to her; she would not put up with them. People said that Scotchmen were that way, but she thought him different. As long as he gave her what she wanted things would go on all

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right ; let him try to starve her again and he would smell brimstone.

"Send for the police, indeed !" she cried. "I suppose you did not think I heard that long-legged, red-headed fellow tell the porter to fetch a policeman. He should have done it, and I would have dragged some of his carrots from him !"

Allan did his best to soothe her. He could not hate her yet, for he was still in hopes that she might again become the same Chloe of Etaroonie, whose disposition was so gentle. He had an excuse for her : she was about to become a mother, and Cousin Euphemia said that women were always cross at such times. He would arrange that she might get credit at several places for her household supplies, and trust that some time or other he would be able to pay.

To go into the details of Chloe's fits of temper would be tiresome. Sometimes she was really mad. Once she tore a piece of cloth into strips because her husband could not give her money for expensive trimmings. She threw a tumbler at him as they sat at

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table and smashed the soup tureen in front of his face.

Cousin Euphemia still remained. To the husband she was deferential and quiet, keeping herself in the background ; during his absence she talked over everything he had said and done, and gradually roused Chloe until all good feeling was lost. The negro element came to the front for a time, to give place later to the obstinacy of the Indian.

Allan thought that possibly a little change up the river would do her good. He would not suggest it to her, for that would be quite sufficient to set her against it, but he wrote to her father. Mr. Bunting invited his daughter to come up and spend a few weeks, but, on the suggestion of Euphemia, Chloe postponed the visit until after her child was born.

As their debts accumulated credit became more difficult to obtain. Allan went from place to place, making promises that he had no reasonable prospect of fulfilling, until he was quite shocked to think what a liar he had become. The fact was he had become afraid of Chloe, and Cousin Euphemia tried to im-

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press upon him the necessity of preventing her getting annoyed while in her present condition. Chloe had threatened several times to again visit the store when her husband told her he could not get what she wanted. She would make a big row next time; the police would have to carry both of them to the lock-up. Did he think she was going to be trod upon by any white man, just because she was coloured? If he had brought out a Scotchwoman, he would have had to give her a horse and carriage, and take her to Government House. Better she had married one of her own colour. What did he want her to do? Go on the street? She could do that fast enough. If he could not support her, other men would. Let her lift a finger, and half a dozen would be round any day. But she was not going to do this if he treated her properly; she would not vex the minister who had married them.

“Oh, Chloe! How can you say such things? You surely do not mean to do anything so wicked.”

“Not mean it! Of course I mean it, and that you will soon see if you bother me too

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much. You don't know me! I can be a blackguard if I like! Wasn't my great grandmother black? And don't you know that black women fight with their men? But you poor cowardly whites can't lift a finger to a woman. We can beat you, and we do it too. Poor, miserable, stingy wretches you are. Look at your sickly white faces! My face always looks the same; when you get fever we can't bear to look at you. Don't think I am going to nurse you; I would scorn to go near you."

CHAPTER VII

FROM ANGEL TO DEVIL

IN due time the baby was born. It was a girl, and, the gossips said, bid fair to be as handsome as the mother. Now, thought the proud father, Chloe will be different ; her maternal duties will keep her at home, and now that the great trouble is over her violent temper will no doubt be soothed. The midwife told him that he must not cross her in any way, or her milk would become sour, and this would be bad for the infant ; he must let her have anything she wanted as quickly as possible.

Poor Allan ! Here was another trouble. His credit was entirely gone, and he knew not where to get necessaries, much less those extras which are wanted at such a time. The baby must have this, that, and the other thing, and Chloe a new gown to go to church with after her confinement.

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Then came the christening. A special robe had to be provided, a carriage, and a feast to the gossips. It was maddening to the young fellow, yet in some way he managed to get everything. Such an event did not happen every day, and Euphemia was always at hand to urge that such things *must* be done. Instead of a blessing the little infant was another drawback, as a nurse must be hired, the mother caring little for it save as something to exhibit to her female friends.

Allan was worried and pestered in the store by duns, to whom he had to tell more lies than he had ever told in his life before. They became at last so pertinacious that his work was seriously hampered. The other clerks became disgusted, as hardly a day passed without one of Allan's creditors coming in to threaten him with a suit if he did not pay at once. Some went to Mr. Hickson and asked him to stop his salary, and when they were informed that he had overdrawn his account, they cursed and abused him until threatened with the police.

Now he was summoned to appear at the police-court, and as he could make no defence,

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judgment was given against him. An execution followed, and Chloe was driven nearly mad when the bailiffs came and carried off the furniture, leaving the cottage almost bare.

The day on which this took place was an unfortunate one for Allan. Mr. Hickson called him into his office, and, after looking sternly at him, said—

“ Well, Gordon, you have made a mess of it, as I said you would. We can’t have such goings-on in our store. You must quit. I don’t want to be hard upon you ; here is the balance of your salary up to the end of next month, and I want you to go away at once, before any more of your creditors come in to make a disturbance.”

Allan could say nothing ; he knew as well as his employer that such things could not be allowed in a well-conducted dry-goods store. He took the few dollars, gathered up his two or three belongings at the mess-house, got a coolie to carry them, and, haggard and depressed, walked to his home.

He had not yet heard of the execution on his furniture, but he was not surprised as he entered

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to find the rooms bare, for he knew it was bound to come. Chloe was crying upon the floor, with Euphemia doing her best to comfort her according to her usual manner.

"See what marriage has brought you to ! You would have a white man, you know ; one of our bovianders was not good enough for you. We have no bailiffs up the river."

Euphemia did not say that they had no furniture to take away at Etaroonie ; she also omitted to mention that the credit of a boviander was worthless. Of course Chloe was not to blame ; as for Miss Euphemia herself, it never entered her mind that she was almost entirely answerable for the ruin of this once pretty home.

Allan's appearance gave Chloe the opportunity of unloading her mind. She did this in a way that astonished her husband, notwithstanding that he was accustomed by this time to hear some rather strong language from her lips ; those lips which were once put to such a different use. A torrent of vile epithets poured forth, and he could not help wondering where she could have learnt them.

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The baby woke at the noise, and Allan, clapping his hands over his ears, ran out on the street, his wife following him to the gate and relating her grievances to the neighbours, who had already begun to congregate.

From the little mob of negro women expressions of sympathy for the distressed wife could be heard. One said this was the worst of marrying a white man; they got poor women into trouble and left them to bear it by themselves. "Look at him going up the street; he does not think of his poor wife and baby without a bed to sleep on. He ought to be pelted." One boy took up a stone and threw it at Allan, but as he was walking quickly it fell short.

The poor husband walked on towards the Race Course, his only desire at present being to get away from the city altogether. What to do or where to go he knew not, nor did he much care. He was tired of life; all his prospects were blighted; he was a liar and a thief, all for a pretty face and figure. Her vile language still rung in his ears; he could not get over the shock. Was it possible that

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this could be Chloe? She must be stark mad or possessed by the Evil One.

Presently he became more calm and could think a little. Should he throw himself into the river, or try to get away in one of the vessels in harbour? He knew several ship captains, but none of them was leaving for a week or two; he must leave Georgetown to-night or early in the morning.

As it became dusk he climbed into the Long Stand on the Race Course and sat down to think. Thousands of fireflies were gleaming over the greensward and frogs were whistling their evening notes, but he did not hear them. The crisis of his life had come. He could never see Chloe again. He still loved her in a fashion, but it was impossible to go on any longer. If he met her again he would either be horrified by her curses or else be again led into dishonesty. For he knew too well that his giving way to her in the first place was wrong; his sense of right had been blunted, now it again became sharpened and cut him to the heart.

What could he do? He must get away.

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But where? His only chance was to get far away, right up the Essequebo, and live among the Indians. They would welcome him, he had no doubt, for only the other day the head of a party had asked him to go with them; he would get away from the shame which now oppressed him. He still had the few dollars which Mr. Hickson gave him; Chloe would have got these had she not met him with such a torrent of abuse. Yes, he would go by the morning steamer to Aranama, and see if these Macusis had yet started.

Sitting on the bare boards of the "Stand," his mind wandered to that night up the creek. How could he account for the change which had taken place in the handsome boviander? A little over a year had passed, and the apparently soft and gentle girl had become a virago. He tried to find out where the blame lay; certainly nothing in his conduct had brought on the change. Cousin Euphemia and the low acquaintances she had made in Georgetown had something to do with it, but there must be hereditary taint. The African savage had come to the front, and dominated the other sides in her.

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The night passed slowly, but dawn appeared at length to find Allan cramped but quite prepared to carry out his decision. He timed his arrival at the wharf for a few minutes before the steamer left, to avoid observation, and on his embarking felt a sense of relief. The burden which had almost broken him down during the last twelvemonth felt lighter already, and as the vessel steamed out to sea, before passing along the coast, he almost sung for joy.

Now and again, however, the thought of his child came up. How would the poor little thing be treated? Possibly Chloe would vent her spite upon it, for he had heard of such cases. Since his unhappy experience of wedded life he had inquired of some of the coloured clerks how they managed to keep house on such small salaries as they received. Some could hardly tell, but one of them gave him a few scraps of information in confidence. His wife was also a virago, and they had three children. He, like Allan, had tried to keep out of debt, but he could only do so by the greatest firmness. And then, the poor little ones ; how they were growing up he was ashamed to say.

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With their mother always trying to foment a quarrel, and using language quite unfit for the ears of adult persons much less children, their home was a veritable hell. Allan had heard of some men taking to drink, of others running away, of many who had been ruined for life ; he would endeavour to wipe out the past and turn over a new leaf.

Still the thought of his little girl haunted him. Perhaps some day he might be able to remove her from the evil associations ; at present he could do nothing. He was beginning life again, as it were, and must think a great deal before doing anything more than retire from the neighbourhood where he had suffered so much.

As the little steamer continued her voyage and the sea-breeze blew upon his haggard cheeks his mind became more calm. He was going to Aranama, but he did not know what he should do when he got there. The few shillings he had, after paying for his passage and a breakfast, would not go very far. But he knew that if he came across the party of Indians who had lately been in town, and who

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had offered to give him a trip to the Macusi country, he would be all right. Perhaps they had started already.

In the afternoon he arrived at his destination, which was then little more than an Indian Mission station. Gold-digging was unknown as yet, and the little village was a rendezvous for the parties of red men who came down at long intervals.

On landing Allan hardly knew what to do. He had nothing but the clothes he stood up in, and the few shillings in his pocket. He wandered along the irregular street fronting the river, eagerly looking for some sign of the friendly Macusis, but at first could see nothing of them. Several people stared out from the doors of their little huts, wondering what a white man could be doing there. One little negro child ran away screaming at the sight of him ; possibly his haggard face frightened it.

What should he do? Night was coming on, and he was tired. Down near the river was a logie, or shed ; perhaps he might find a place where he could sit down.

As he entered a confused assemblage of

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hammocks met his eyes, and almost immediately his Indian acquaintance welcomed him with the few words of English he could muster, calling him "Mattee," and asking him partly by signs whether he wanted to go with them up the Essequibo. He nodded assent, and was at once made welcome.

In this logie, which had been provided for the accommodation of Indian visitors, a dozen of both sexes were lounging in their hammocks. The majority were men, but there were two women, who out of respect to the Mission wore long nightgown-like dresses. They talked with each other in the soft, gentle manner so characteristic of the aborigines of Guiana when they are sober, and Allan stood up for a few minutes looking on.

Seeing that he had no hammock, one of his friends got up and offered his, intimating that he would join one of the others. Allan hardly liked to deprive him of his lounge, but as he knew that he would be quite welcome, and would have offended them if he had refused to take it, he slipped in. One of the women then brought him some cassava bread and a calabash

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with pepper-pot, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Having finished his evening meal he tried to converse with them by signs and a few words he had picked up, by which he learnt that they were starting up the river next morning.

Presently his friends settled down to sleep, but although Allan was very tired the strangeness of his surroundings kept him thinking. Fortunately none of the few white men at Aranama had seen him come here, and he hoped by leaving early in the morning to escape observation. He did not suppose that Chloe would follow him, but there was no knowing what a woman of that sort would do. He believed that she would venture up the rapids if by doing so she could vent her spite upon him, and he was anxious to be off before any one should recognise him and set her on his track. He would not be free from this anxiety until they were actually on the way ; then he would be happy.

How often do others feel the same way ! The young Scotchman once thought it would be the culminating point of his felicity when he was married to the handsome boviander ; now

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he looked forward with hope to entire freedom from her clutches.

At last nature could bear no more ; his thoughts became confused, and he fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

UP THE ESSEQUEBO

FOR three long weeks the party struggled against the strong current of the Essequebo river. Ascending dangerous rapids one after another from the second day of their journey, for the first week they made little progress ; afterwards they had only to contend with the rushing stream. In the afternoon they encamped, and one or two of the men went hunting for a supper, which they sometimes obtained by shooting an acourie, labba, or peccary. Quite as often they had nothing to eat, and Allan, who had always been accustomed to regular meals, felt these privations very much. Then he was exposed to drenching rains, which often fell in such torrents as to necessitate baling to prevent their canoe being swamped.

Allan envied the Indians. The men had

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been wearing shirts at Aranama and the women loose frocks; now they stripped and placed these articles carefully away in their pegalls, or wicker trunks, leaving themselves naked save for the lap of the men and queyu, or bead apron, of the women. The rain poured on their backs and then off again; the sun tried his best to frizzle them, but they felt quite comfortable. If they got a meal they ate voraciously, if nothing they never complained.

If the young Scotchman was to live amongst them he must learn to endure privation in the same way. How could he ever hope to succeed? Certainly not by cuddling himself. His clothes and boots would wear out; how could he get more? As yet he had always enjoyed good health, and thought he could do the same as his companions. His clothes were dripping with moisture and his boots sodden after the first great shower. He had no others and must take them off. The afternoon sun shone warm upon the river, and on the sandy spit where the party were encamped; now was the time to dry them.

In the presence of the women he was

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ashamed to strip, but going behind a tree he denuded himself to his shirt, and laid out the other garments upon the sand. Feeling still chilly and uncomfortable, he wandered off to a little distance, stripped himself quite naked, laid out his shirt to dry, and took a plunge into the water. Not to remain long, however, for suddenly he was surrounded with a shoal of small fish, which he recognised from reports as the dreaded perai. He kicked and splashed as he hurried to the shore, but, notwithstanding the shallowness of the water, he received several bites, each of which carried off a tiny piece of one of his toes.

Tearing off a piece from his shirt he bound up his feet and sat down on the warm sand to await the drying of his clothes. Only his head was covered by his limp felt hat and his back was turned towards the afternoon sun, which had not yet gone down behind the bank of foliage on the western shore of the great river. Presently he felt a pricking sensation over the shoulders, attended by a great heat, and knew at once that the rays of the sun were burning him. Fortunately his shirt was dry

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enough to put on, and he was saved for the present from a severe blistering.

What could he do? His feet were too tender to allow of his walking barefooted, and his skin would be a mass of sores if he went naked. The food supply was very uncertain, and his stomach revolted against such a thing as barbecued monkey. However, he must make the best of it; whatever happened he could never go back.

His companions were comfortable enough. Even if Allan could have told them how he suffered, they would not have understood. Their naked feet were inured to the rough walking of the forest and the burning rocks in the midst of the river, among which they hauled the canoe when the rapids came down like mill-streams. Their broad backs were quite unaffected by burning sun or pouring rain, and their limbs uncramped by sitting on the bottom of the canoe or on the sticks which served as thwarts.

Oh! this awful journey! How Allan wished he had never come out to Demerara! Better be dead than to endure the chill of wet clothing

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and the beating down of the sun day after day. Would it never end? During the last few days he became apathetic; the joints of his lower limbs were so cramped that he could hardly feel them, and when the party landed for the night he could barely walk. His knee-joints were alternately stiff and limp, and his head felt heavy. He could only lie in the hammock and try to cool his throbbing temples with some green leaves which one of the women had kindly brought him.

At night he could not sleep. He tossed about in his yielding couch as far as it would permit, and vainly tried everything possible to induce unconsciousness. But no, he had been too severely taxed for more than a fortnight; the shock to the mind had been followed by an enormous strain upon the body. If he dozed for a few minutes, it was to dream of his wife. At one time she was following him with an Indian club; she had stripped herself, and had become the dreaded Kenaima, the avenger of blood. Her lovely body was painted with spots like those of the jaguar, and her eyes were balls of fire. He ran from her into the forests, but

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she followed him everywhere. He waded out into the river and clambered upon a great boulder, beneath which rushed a turbulent stream, with rapids and whirlpools. She followed and he jumped in, to be carried down among the tangle of lacis and into the haunts of the great pacou.

He woke to find himself struggling with one of the Indians, who held him back from plunging into the river. The red man helped him into his hammock, and laid his hand on the burning forehead, but said nothing. They all knew he was sick, but what could they do?

One of the women boiled some greenheart seeds to make him a drink, which relieved him somewhat, and enabled him to go on next day. But the rain and the sun were alternately having their effect, and as night fell the throbbing of the temples began, until he raved so wildly that the kind woman slung her hammock close enough to watch and prevent his wandering into the forest or jumping into the river.

As the small hours of the morning came he

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began to shake with ague. His teeth chattered, and every limb jerked spasmodically. His nurse made a fire immediately beside his hammock, and almost choked him by throwing upon it a bundle of green leaves. In this apology for a vapour-bath he lay until relieved by a perspiration, and perhaps fell asleep for an hour.

When the sun rose he felt a little better. The head of the party offered to take him back to Aranama, but Allan refused to give so much trouble. If he was to die let death come in the midst of these wilds. Like most Scotchmen, he was a fatalist ; if death was preordained, the time was fixed ; it would not matter where he was when the hour arrived, the inevitable must happen. Better to suffer in the company of these quiet people than to go back to Georgetown, and be worried. In two days more they would arrive at the Rupununi, on a bank of which the Macusi village was situated ; perhaps he would be better then.

Allan's friends made him as comfortable in the day as the narrow limits of a canoe will allow. They put up a little screen of palm leaves to partially shield him from the sun and

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rain. Sometimes he was free from the pain in the head ; then the feeling of relief was so great that he was almost comfortable. The monotonous thump and swish of the paddles, as the Indians pulled on and on, hour after hour, tended to soothe him until he could almost sleep. Yet he knew that he was on the river, and that at either side were great banks of foliage rising upwards to that sun which had shone so pitilessly upon him in the earlier part of his journey.

At such times his dreams were pleasant. His childhood days came back. He saw himself wandering upon the hills, at school, or in the little shop where he had served his apprenticeship. Even Chloe would sometimes appear, not as the virago of Georgetown, but as the handsome boviander of Etaroonie. How he loved her! Deep down in his heart there was an intense feeling, which, however it might be hidden by the horror and dread she had so lately inspired, still glowed and was ready to burst into flame. It was like the fire which the Indian woman had covered with green leaves ; unable to escape from its smothering burden, it

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made its presence known by a dense, hot smoke.

Would it ever be possible for him to be happy again? Sometimes he felt as if all women were hateful. And yet these poor Indian women, who were little better than beasts of burden for their husbands, seemed kind enough. Surely all women were not like his wife! Perhaps he might yet find one who would console him for his loss.

Now he was sick he wanted sympathy, and this did not appear to exist among his Indian friends. They were kind in their way, but, from his wanting the means of communicating with them properly, he felt very lonely. He thought of his mother, and how she would grieve if she knew him to be all alone in the wilds of Guiana, sick and in trouble.

But enough of this; he would be strong yet, and perhaps do something to make his name known in the world. He must learn the Macusi language and try to study their manners and customs. He would also investigate the plants and animals of the great savannah.

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At last the party arrived at the mouth of the Rupununi, and in a day or two a change in the aspect of the country was perceptible to Allan. Hitherto the banks had been covered with great trees ; these became gradually lower, until passing glimpses of open grassy savannah could be seen through gaps in the wall of vegetation on either hand.

Allan could see that the Indians were pleased as they got nearer home, and even he began to hope that his fever would abate when once he was free from the hardships of the voyage. What he did not like, however, were the swarms of sandflies which gathered round them at the camps. Hitherto, neither mosquitoes nor any other troublesome pests had interfered with him ; now he had these bloodsuckers to contend with at night, as he lay burning or shivering in his hammock. In the morning his face and hands were covered with tiny spots, which soon became the centres of swellings that almost closed his eyes. How they itched ! He was almost mad with the feeling of puffiness, and the desire to rub his skin into sores.

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However, the party arrived at the village one afternoon, to be met by a pack of hungry curs, who crowded round the stranger as he was helped out of the canoe.

Home at last! Even the Indians were glad to meet their friends after a two months' absence. The villagers came out to see what had been brought from Georgetown. There was a package of beads for the women, knives and axes, blue salemores, and, above everything else, a supply of powder and shot. There was no embracing, and but few words were spoken, yet they were pleased in their quiet sort of way, and glad to inspect the different articles.

The village consisted of about thirty huts, and was placed on the summit of a little mound, which raised it above the level of the plain. Unlike the sheds of the forest Indians, the dwellings of the Macusis were circular, and thatched down to the ground. This made them very dark and hot, and as Allan was led to one of the best, he thought it a very undesirable place for a sick man.

The walls were hung with gourds of various

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sizes and shapes, some of them filled with water, and on the ground were two great pig-troughs, as Allan thought, but which he afterwards discovered were receptacles for piwarrie, the Indian's beer. Hanging overhead were blow-pipes, bows and arrows, various kinds of baskets, one or two clubs, balls of cotton yarn, and two of those showy feather crowns which are worn on festive occasions. At the side farthest from the doorway was the hearth, consisting of an iron slab for baking the cassava bread, and near it came the matapee for pressing out the poisonous juice.

Slung across were several hammocks, into one of which Allan was placed, for he could hardly climb to it without assistance. He sunk down and surveyed the furnishings of his chamber as far as the dim light would allow. It looked very dirty from the smoke, but was not so unwholesome as might be thought. It was certainly a shelter from the rain and sun, but so hot as almost immediately to cause profuse perspiration.

Allan took off his coat, which, with so many wettings, was discoloured and had a mouldy

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smell, and tried to sleep, in which he at last succeeded.

Next morning he felt better, and went outside. There was, however, little to be seen, save a few cotton-bushes and a curatella, the sandpaper-like leaves of which are used for polishing bows and wooden arrow-points. The only food-plants were a few peppers (*capsicums*), and at first he wondered where the cassava came from. Here were a dozen women at work washing the roots, peeling, and grating them into pulp, but no sign of a provision ground. However, he knew that it must be somewhere not very far off, and was glad to see that the food supply was apparently abundant. The men were out hunting, and the whole place had almost an air of desertion, from the quiet way the women went about their tasks. They hardly looked at the stranger, but one young girl brought him a calabash of pepper-pot and a cake of cassava bread, on which he tried to make a breakfast, but without much success. The stinging taste of the capsicums stirred his palate a little, otherwise he could not have swallowed anything.

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He thanked the girl in the best way he could, and again retired to his hammock.

In the afternoon he was roused from a doze by the sound of a peculiar rattling, and presently the doorway of the hut was obstructed by a grotesque figure, painted, and fully dressed with two or three necklaces and a feather crown. He held a large rattle in his hand, formed of a calabash pierced through with a stick, and trimmed with feathers, with which he made the noise that had roused his patient.

Yes, this was the physician of the tribe, the Peaiman, who had been brought to cure Allan of his fever. In the opinion of his friends some enemy was at work, and the Peaiman would drive him away. He looked at Allan, and after giving orders to one of the women, retired for a short time, to return with a calabash of some hot nauseous drink, which he almost forced the sick man to take. At the same time, the women had been busy making a fire in the hut, on which some green leaves were heaped until the place was obscured with a dense smoke.

From the effects of the hot drink and this

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primitive vapour-bath Allan began to perspire at every pore. Then the Peaiman shook his rattle, and commenced an altercation with the devil, which lasted for fully an hour. Of course the patient could not understand a word that was said, but he afterwards had a dreamy recollection of something like a dispute going on, in which the orders of the Peaiman were answered by defiance on the part of the enemy. It was as if the one commanded the other to leave his friend alone, which order for a long time he refused to obey.

Allan lay in the hammock, his head aching with the din, only the Peaiman apparently being present. Yet, from amidst the smoke a second voice certainly came, attended by a swishing and whirl, like the fluttering of some monstrous bat. Challenges, shouts, cries, refusals of obedience, and demands came from the contending parties, the voice of the enemy being loudest in the beginning, but gradually sinking as he became worsted in the conflict.

When and how it all ended, Allan never knew; he became unconscious, and sunk into

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a dreamless state, from which nothing could wake him for a long time.

When he came to himself the sun was high and shining on the little patch of ground beyond the open doorway. His headache was gone, and he felt much better ; but, when he tried to get out of the hammock his legs gave way, and he lay upon the ground unable to rise. The vapour-bath and the warm drink had taken away the little strength remaining after the fever, and now he was indeed an invalid. He instinctively called for help as he fell, and immediately a young girl came in. She lifted him up without any difficulty and placed him in the hammock, at the same time putting her soft hand on his forehead to feel if it was hot.

This semblance to a caress was the first sign of feeling Allan had experienced since he had joined the Indians, and he could not refrain from pressing her hand gratefully. She looked confused as if she did not understand ; her seeming caress was nothing more than a kind of examination to see if the work of her father the Peaiman had been successful. When Allan

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held her wrist she did not snatch it away, but humoured the patient's whim, as no doubt she considered it.

Allan's mind was now clear, and he could not help gazing at his nurse, as she might be called. Naked, save for a pretty fringed bead apron, her beautiful figure was displayed before him. Unlike most of the Indian women he had before seen, she was not short and stunted, but, on the contrary, of a fair height. Her ruddy brown skin was beautifully clear and her breasts were worthy the attention of a sculptor. Her bearing was truly modest as she withdrew herself from his feeble grasp, and he felt as if he had lost a friend as she disappeared.

However, she quickly returned with a calabash of thin pepper-pot and a cake of cassava bread, and appeared gratified when he managed to eat a few bits of the latter, after soaking them in the sauce. Being so weak, he was glad to let her hold the calabash for him, and she was thus detained for a longer time.

After a light meal he again fell asleep, and did not wake until next morning. These two

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long spells of sleep had worked wonders ; he was another man. With the fever had gone that hopeless feeling which made him content to die ; now he would strive to get about as soon as possible. His mind was clear, and his appetite had returned.

The girl brought him some barbecued venison, which he ate almost voraciously, at sight of which she looked pleased. Then she helped him out of his hammock and set him upon his legs, her arms causing a thrill to the convalescent as he felt them holding him up. Possibly he let himself appear weaker than he really was, for the purpose of retaining her near him, but when she saw that he could stand and walk to the doorway she left him alone.

On the shady side of the hut was a low stool, and on this Allan sat to have a view of the settlement. The women were busy as usual, and a few boys were playing. Around the huts were many different species of half-tame animals, including domestic fowls, parrots, macaws, toucans, and monkeys, and the youngsters were shooting at them with blunt arrows, not caring whether they injured them or not.

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But the animals were wary, and not being confined in any way, they got among the low bushes or made off into the savannah, to slyly come back when their tormentors became weary of their sport.

Allan made a sign to one of them, and he came up and handed him his bow. The white man tried to shoot at one of the papaw trees, but could hardly draw the bow. How insignificant he felt! This little boy was stronger than he and more fitted for the work of a huntsman. He could almost cry with vexation at his failures. And then, to be despised by a little boy of ten! He well knew that weakness was despicable in the eyes of every Indian, and that the women would look upon him with contempt.

This would never do. He thought of the handsome girl who had been so kind to him ; he must do something to show his manhood. Sitting down upon a bench when the other men were out hunting was something disgraceful. He was weak now, but when he became strong again how could he gain *her* respect? He must learn to hunt, fish, and shoot, and he determined to commence as soon as possible.

CHAPTER IX

THE INITIATION

THE Macusi village stood near the edge of the great Pirara savannah, the site of the fabled Lake Parima of Raleigh and the old geographers. To the west of this great inland sea was located the city of Manoa, capital of the empire of "El Dorado," the gilded king. Modern travellers have reduced the great sea from the size of the Caspian to a reedy pool called Lake Amucu, which, with other bits of swamp, is all that is left of the fabulous lake of golden sands. At times, however, the semblance of a great body of water is still produced ; floods rise and cover all the lower grounds, leaving only the hillocks, like that on which the village was placed, to appear above the surface.

Allan could do little but think as he lay in his hammock. His mind wandered to the stories he had read ; the gilded king, the

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cannibals, and men with eyes in their breasts. How he longed for a book, or some one to talk with! The feeling of loneliness was intensified from the fact that he was not only sick, but without even an acquaintance. He could not speak the language, and no one in the village knew English, or if such a person lived there he did not come near.

The Peaiman came in now and then to look at his patient. He looked pleased at the obvious improvement, which, in his opinion, was, of course, due to the conjurations. He had gained another victory over the Hori, or devil, and could shake his rattle and raise his head an inch or two higher. His daughter brought Allan food morning and night, and he was always glad to see her. Like a ray of sunshine in the dark, smoke-begrimed hut, she appeared for a few minutes and then left him to feel all the more lonely. He tried on several occasions to keep her with him for a few minutes longer than her errand required, but she was shy, and, as he got better and could walk about, absented herself altogether.

His acquaintance who had brought him from

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Bartica was generally engaged in hunting and fishing, and even when he paid a visit in the evening, he knew too little of English to be able to carry on a conversation. For a sick man to endeavour to make himself understood by signs is a hard task, and this Allan discovered very quickly. He was too feeble, and had to give it up. He must learn the language; but how? As he became strong enough to crawl to the door he saw that the boys of the village were practising with their bows, and he beckoned to one of them. The boy hesitated a little; he was somewhat afraid of the pale face which met his gaze. However, like all Indian boys, he had to hide his feelings, for it would never do to let the other youngsters see anything like fear upon his face.

The boy came, and Allan, pointing to the bow and arrows, asked by signs what were their names. The boy could not understand at first what the sick man wanted, but in a few minutes he grasped the situation and soon he was giving the stranger his first lesson in the Macusi language.

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Day after day, as he got better, Allan came out among the boys, not only learning their language in this way, but also practising archery and watching their games, which always represented something connected with the daily life of a hunter or fisherman.

At last he felt strong enough to take his place as a man among the others. He now accompanied them on their hunting excursions; practised shooting at deer on the savannah and at birds on the edge of the forest, until he became proficient. At night they went duck shooting on the reedy pools or laying spring hooks along the banks of the river. He was naturally clumsy at first, and got left alone in the forest on several occasions when his companions wanted to quietly approach their game. By degrees, however, he attained to some degree of excellence in the only profession possible to an Indian, that of the hunter, and was correspondingly respected by his fellows. But he could never acquire that stealthy tread which is so necessary, and to which the red man is born as it were.

At first he wore boots as a matter of course,

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but when they fell to pieces, he was bound to go barefoot. To walk on the rough savannah, where in one place the bare ground would be burning hot, and in another the irregular tufts of sharp sedges would cut his feet, was at first very painful. He came home sore from every walk; nevertheless, by strong efforts of will, he went on until the soles were hardened. His one suit of clothes also turned to rags, and he had to discard everything but a shirt. This he was always obliged to wear, for his tender white skin became blistered whenever he attempted to leave it off. Fortunately for him, the men who had gone down to town had brought back those they had worn when in contact with civilisation, and as they did not require a covering on the savannah Allan had no difficulty in protecting his back and shoulders.

This initiation into the life of the natural man was certainly painful, but before he could become perfect he must undergo another form of torture—inoculation with the several beenas, or charms, which would make him quite proficient as a huntsman. He had already seen

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the operation performed, and by no means liked the process, but if he was ever to gain the respect of the community in which he had decided to cast his lot, he must undergo it. Unless it were done he would never become a man, much less a huntsman ; he therefore agreed to the proposition of the Peaiman, who he found was also the chief of their community, that the ceremony of initiation should take place on a certain day.

The time having come, a cord like the thong of a whip was passed up his nose and drawn out at the back of the mouth ; after which his breast and arms were scarified, and the acrid juices of certain caladiums rubbed into the wounds. Both operations were exceedingly painful, but they must be endured without wincing. Allan bit his lips to prevent an instinctive cry as the acrid juice ran into the cuts and made them feel like lines of fire, and thus succeeded in giving satisfaction to the assembly.

Now he must show off his newly acquired manhood by taking part in the grand piwarrie feast given in his honour. For several days

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previous the women and girls had been making large quantities of cassava bread ; then they sat round long troughs and canoes, chewing the cakes and spitting the pulp into these receptacles. When enough had been prepared, water was poured on, the mixture stirred, and left to ferment for two or three days.

This thick, repulsive-looking mixture was now ready, and the orgie began. The men lounged in their hammocks, while their wives and daughters brought calabash after calabash of the liquor, which they drank until each had taken several gallons. Their object was to get drunk, and as piwaree is but a weak intoxicant, this naturally took some time, and a great quantity had to be taken before the desired result was attained.

Allan looked on with disgust, and when, as the great personage of the day, he was presented with one calabash after another, he simply put them to his mouth and handed them back almost untasted. This displeased the women, who soon began to remark upon his want of manliness, while the men became almost angry at the slight. Presently, how-

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ever, an old woman suggested that the bearers of the liquor did not meet his approval ; perhaps they were too old. Let some young girl attend upon him, and as he was of such importance, the daughter of the Chief might be assigned to the office.

The Chief or Peaiman had three wives to attend upon him, and could therefore easily dispense with his daughter, who, though somewhat shy, took up a handsomely carved calabash of the liquor and offered it to the honoured initiate. Allan looked on her with admiration, for she was somewhat flushed with the draughts she had taken, and could no longer refuse. He overcame his repugnance and swallowed the draught, with the result that his spirits rose and he began to enjoy the orgie. It was not long before the drink took effect. The girl looked on admiringly and soon all her shyness was overcome. She drank with him, sat down in the same hammock and allowed him to stroke her soft skin, while the crowd looked on with pleasure.

Allan was not yet well versed in the Macusi customs, and therefore did not know that the

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presentation of drink by an unmarried girl to a bachelor was equivalent to a declaration of love. But the Chief's daughter well understood what she was doing, and was quite content with the result. The white man had refused the offerings of others but had enjoyed hers ; they were therefore an engaged couple, and she need be no longer bashful. Allan entered into the spirit of the entertainment and became quite amorous as the drink took possession of him, until at last he hardly knew what he was doing. He fell into a dreamy, muddled condition, in which everything swam round him, only now and again something out of the way attracting his attention.

In this dreamy state he saw a crowd of drunken men come round his hammock, in the midst of whom stood the Chief with his Peaiman's rattle, which he shook, and which roused Allan somewhat from his lethargy. He looked round for the young girl, and saw that she was gathering sticks, to make a little fire immediately in front of his hammock. She fetched a brand from outside, lit the sticks, and then giving Allan two or three pieces, guided his

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shaking hand so that he could drop them on the fire. What it meant he neither knew nor cared at that time ; a ceremony was being performed in which he and the girl were taking part together with her father. The Peaiman went over a form of words, which, with Allan's imperfect knowledge of the language and in his then condition, he could not understand, and then came unconsciousness.

Next morning he woke with a headache, and a sore feeling all over his scarified body. Turning over in his restlessness, he found that another hammock was slung close to his and that in it lay the girl who had been so kind to him. He could hardly understand what had taken place, for his head was still confused, but when the girl got up and presently appeared with his breakfast he learnt that they were now man and wife.

At first he was somewhat startled ; his innate ideas of morality revolted. Soon, however, a feeling of pleasure stole over him ; he had now one friend at least in the community, he would no longer be so entirely isolated. It was very nice to lie down and watch her graceful

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motions as she attended to her household duties. She was certainly handsome ; the only blemish in his opinion being a wavy blue tattooed line stretching across the face above her upper lip. Her colour was a warm brown, without spot or freckle, and her naked body seemed to harmonise with her surroundings. How he wished that his skin was not so pale and tender ; he was a delicate exotic, she a sturdy native of this sunny land.

Now he began to feel at home ; he was not only a member of the community but one of the family of the Chief. Hitherto he had been alone and friendless ; he had been here on sufferance ; it was not the duty of any one to look after him. He was provided with a wife like the rest, and in her he had some one to live for, some one to welcome him on his return from hunting, and to nurse him if he again became sick. Yes, he had become a man in the opinion of his fellows, for hitherto, without wife or relations, he had been in the position of an outcast.

As for Chloe, he must dismiss her from his thoughts altogether ; she was unworthy. Prob-

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ably he would never see her again, for at present, civilised life was abhorrent to him. The women in cities were unfit to marry ; instead of helping a man they were hindrances. They were very exacting in their demands and never thought they had responsibilities as well as privileges. The only way in which man and wife could live happily was that natural condition he saw around him. Here the duties of husband and wife were well defined ; each did his or her share, but in case of a dispute the woman was understood to be the inferior. This was as it should be, for in every house, as in every community, there must be an acknowledged head.

Allan had seen enough of Indian life to perceive that, although there was little sympathy between man and wife, there was at the same time no friction. The man hunted, fished, built the house, and chopped down a small portion of the forest for a provision ground ; the woman planted, made the bread, and cooked the meat. Neither could interfere with the duties of the other ; each knew what should be done, and was in honour bound to do it. True,

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custom ruled here as elsewhere, but it was fixed as the blue mountains which rose on the edge of the savannah. Nobody wanted to change ; every one was generally contented and happy.

Whether Allan could be contented with such a life for many years did not occur to him at that moment. He was really enjoying a change ; going the way of the world in seeking out strange things. This was something so utterly different from all he had hitherto seen and heard that the novelty alone was charming. Here he was on his feet again with no one to bother him ; he had no employer or customers to please, and nothing but a series of pleasant hunting and fishing excursions in prospective. Why, the whole thing was as good as a picnic ! Of course, as in picnics, he would have to put up with a few inconveniences, but, after all, they meant but little. He would soon get over his feeling of nakedness, and then nothing would stand in the way of happiness.

CHAPTER X

THE MACUSI CHIEF

SAMARANG, Allan's new father-in-law, was a very important personage on the savannah. Both his father and grandfather, like himself, had been Macusi chiefs, and had received from the governors of British Guiana commissions as captains, as well as insignia of office in the shape of hats and long staves. Hitherto Allan had only seen him in his character of Peaiman; when he went to Georgetown he put on his tall beaver hat trimmed with silver lace, and carried his drum-major's staff as if he were indeed a somebody.

Now that Allan had been admitted into his family, the young Scotchman began to find out a great many things of which he had hitherto known nothing. Some twenty years before Samarang had accompanied a celebrated traveller to London, where he had been part of that gentleman's exhibition of Guiana curios

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at a place in Regent Street. With two other Indians of different tribes he had also been presented to the Queen, who had the opportunity of admiring his skill with a bow and blow-pipe. He had learnt a little English, which, however, was now almost forgotten, and had been the pet of a certain clergyman, who thought him a very promising convert.

Samarang returned to Guiana clothed, and in the opinion of the missionary of Aranama, with a right mind, but, like the jackdaw of the fable, he found that his borrowed plumage was not acceptable to his own people. Hardly a week passed after his arrival on the savannah before his clothes were thrown off, and with them the thin veneer of civilisation which had rendered him such a hopeful convert.

He was looked upon with awe by his subjects, for not only had he crossed the great water and spoken to the grand lady who was higher than the Governor, but he was chief by commission as well as right, and a medicine-man into the bargain. Across his forehead was painted a design of the Greek maze pattern and through a hole in his lower lip

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projected the points of quite a bundle of pins. Other men might have from one to three; Samarang must have a dozen at least, one of them being an old-fashioned shawl-pin three to four inches long. Like the English swell or dandy of that time, who was very fond of stroking his "imperial," the Indian Chief often played with his bunch of pins, now pushing them against his teeth and then letting them fall back again.

Allan smiled to himself as he thought of the difficulty of a man kissing his wife with such a *chevaux de frise* on his mouth, but he knew by this time that what was said of the Indians of Surinam two centuries before was as true then, for they were still "so unfortunately ignorant, not to enrich their amorous caresses with that innocent and warm delight of kissing." Even Allan's wife could not understand why he liked to touch her lips.

Up to the present the name of his wife, like those of other women and men of the tribe, had been concealed from him. They never addressed each other by name, but always used words meaning friend, brother, man, or wife.

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The chief's daughter told her husband to call her *Wori*, meaning wife, while in addressing him she always used the word *Hunyo*, my man or husband. For some weeks she refused to tell him her proper name, but after much pressing she whispered in his ear the one word "Yariko."

Yes, she was Yariko, a flower; Allan's precious blossom of the savannah. How pretty, and how well it suited her! She had indeed come into Allan's life to brighten it and raise him from the depths of despair. She was handsome enough to serve as a model for Venus. Yes, and she was far more beautiful than any marble statue, for instead of that cold white which gives us the idea of shivering, her colour prevented every feeling but that of warmth and life from intruding. A white woman, with only the queyu, or apron, about twelve inches by eight, would not only look indecent, but produce a feeling of incongruity; a spectator would want to cover her bare shoulders from wind, rain, and sun. Yariko's nakedness had no such effect on Allan; he certainly admired her untrammelled body, and

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had not the slightest wish to see her wearing the ugly dress then in fashion. Her black hair hung down over her shoulders, her nose, of a moderate size, was hardly flattened, and her lips were thinner than is usual among her people. But what struck Allan most was the sparkle of her black eyes, which seemed to glow like diamonds in the dulness of their gloomy hut.

Chloe had driven him away. Yariko would never behave like Chloe, even if he did carry her away from her native savannah.

Now that Allan had been formally admitted into the community, he took his place in everything that went on. By practice he became an expert bowman, and having few of those indolent fits so common among the Indians, his wife's pepper-pot was always full, and her barbecue loaded with meat. Nothing could make him more respected than this. His wife was pleased and Samarang began to be a little more open with him. Allan did not care to depend altogether upon his father-in-law, however, but thought it best to erect a hut of his own, where he and his wife could be more retired than in a large house with other people.

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This having been finished, they saw less of the chief, for he was very busy making certain arrangements, of which we shall have more to say presently.

Yariko was by no means tender or affectionate; but she was absolutely submissive. Allan would have liked to feel that she loved him, but of this he could never be sure. Like all Indian women, who have inherited the instinct of subjection from their female ancestors, she bore caresses but never gave them in return. Passion in every form was absent; she could never turn out such a virago as Chloe, nor could she respond to anything like the strong love of a white man. This Allan did not altogether like, but his former experience had been so distressing that he was quite content with his flower of the savannah.

She rarely complained of anything, or even suggested that he should or should not do any particular thing. As a rule, although she might dislike his effusive manner when they were alone, the utmost she would do was to keep beyond his reach. She certainly showed a dislike to the hair on his face. Save here and

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there an old man, none of her people had a beard, and even the grandfathers only had a few bristles on the chin which might be counted. Young men got their wives to pluck out each hair as it appeared, but Allan's beard was entirely beyond such a process of extirpation.

At first he would embrace her as he came home from hunting or fishing, but as she showed such a dislike to anything of the sort, he became more circumspect, and waited until they were alone. Once, however, when he had been absent a week, he caught her up in his arms and almost smothered her with kisses, in the presence of several young men, who laughed boisterously at the performance. She seemed really annoyed, although she said nothing ; such a thing was so contrary to all their customs. Probably she did not like her husband to do anything ridiculous, and Allan himself thought it better to avoid it in the future.

Now that he enjoyed good health, he became inured to an outdoor life and almost nakedness. The days passed very happily. Now

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and then game and fish were scarce, and there was some privation ; but generally a little meat could be obtained to savour the sawdust-like cassava bread. His life was like a calm after the storm of the previous twelve months, when he had been almost worried to death. He cleared a piece of ground in the adjoining forest, some three miles away, which Yariko planted with cassava and a few other things. As Allan started for his day's hunting Yariko would place the band of her *suriana* across her forehead and start for the field, to plant, weed, or dig, all of which operations were done with the machete or cutlass. Sometimes, as he returned home, Allan would see his wife bent almost double by the load on her back, and he often wished that he might help her. The band of fibre across her forehead seemed to be cutting into the skin, and as she came in on one occasion he asked her not to carry such heavy loads, at the same time stroking her forehead where the band had discoloured the skin.

She looked at him as if she did not understand, and when he repeated his warning and

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said that she might get her back bent like some of the older women about the settlement, she evidently resented his interference. This was her work, she said ; he must look after fish and game, she would attend to the bread. If he interfered the men would despise him ; she would not like her man to be laughed at. Why, only the other day her *moyeh* (little brother) said that the white man was more like a woman than anything else, and she was obliged to excuse him by a plea of ignorance. How could he make her people respect him if he was not manly ?

For Yariko to say as much as this there must have been indeed good reason, for she had never rebuked him before. Even now her manner was that of a woman doing something she disliked ; she deprecated giving offence, but at the same time probably knew that only ignorance of their customs made him offer to do things which no woman who respected her husband could allow.

Allan was compelled to admit the reasonableness of her protest, although he knew that hard labour in the field and the carrying of heavy

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burdens would tend to spoil her graceful figure. But he must take things as they were ; if he set up as a reformer of the manners and customs of the Macusis he would certainly get into difficulties. He was in the minority of one, and had professed his willingness to abide with them and become one of the tribe ; he could not, therefore, pose as a teacher. He was sorry he had offended Yariko, and told her so plainly, for she was the only real friend he had.

Yes, friendship and love were unknown quantities among these people ; even companionship was almost wanting. No one cared for the others, whether blood relations, wives, or husbands ; there was an utter absence of sympathy as of its opposite. Parents did not chastise their children, nor husbands beat their wives ; life flowed evenly along like the sluggish rivers of the savannah in the dry season. Allan saw that this mode of living had its advantages ; he had been so tossed about among rocks and whirlpools during the previous year that he was bound to appreciate them.

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Yariko undoubtedly liked him as an Indian wife should like her husband ; possibly all the love she was capable of feeling had been given. Now that he came to compare her with Chloe, he saw that there were great resemblances as well as differences between the two women. Rarely, indeed, did the boviander respond to his passionate caresses ; when in a good humour she was submissive, otherwise cantankerous and resentful. Were all women like these two, or were there other classes ? Probably the submissive part of Chloe's nature came from her Indian ancestry ; the opposite from her negro blood. How, then, about the pure white woman ? Was she similar to Chloe, and only kept from being a virago by the influence of her surroundings ? He hardly knew, for up to a year ago he had seen but little of women. True, he had a mother and two sisters in Scotland, but he could hardly say what they were like, as he had spent so little time in their company since his childhood days. Were they such women as he had read of in novels—women who would do anything in the madness of passion ? Chloe was

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certainly passionate, but in how different a manner! Here was Yariko, his beautiful wife, almost as cold as a statue. Was she not the natural woman, subject to man? How, then, should he class the others?

But he would not study such an intricate subject; he was now an Indian and must take things as they came. He had a good wife, whom he passionately loved, and yet he must practise a stoical indifference; pain or pleasure must be borne in the same manner. Above everything he must avoid anything like a display of tenderness before his neighbours. He smiled to himself as he thought of a scene he had witnessed on board the mail steamer in coming out, and the effect it would have had upon the Macusis. Two full-bearded Germans embraced and kissed each other, while a party of sailors looking on broke into a loud guffaw. Almost the same thing happened when Allan kissed Yariko in the presence of the hunting party. How the little Indian boys laughed! Oh! these boys! They are a terror to all lovers; and the men of the Pirara savannah were only grown-up boys.

CHAPTER XI

A PROPHET

WHETHER Samarang had any intention of asking the assistance of Allan Gordon in his projects or not is doubtful. The chief was by no means a fool, but rather a cunning rogue. The experience he had gained with the white traveller, and the information he had picked up in his voyages, were to a certain extent engrafted upon the Indian character, until this latter became somewhat modified.

Samarang was ambitious. Not satisfied with his position as chief and Peaiman of the Macusis, he wished to become ruler over all the tribes in Guiana. To this end he held religious services in a large shed in the village, to which all the Indians of the savannah were invited. Now and again a few Arecunas and Wapisianos attended, but up to the present

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the chief had made little impression. The Indians must be roused in some way, and this could only be done by appealing to their traditions, which centred round the sacred mountain of Roraima.

Ages ago, their ancestors had told them, there was a time when the Macusis had no cultivated vegetables; there were neither cassava nor yams, Indian corn or bananas. Mora seeds and the bitter nuts of the green-heart were all they had with which to make bread, and when game and fish were scarce many died of starvation. Even at the best they were poor and miserable, for without cassava no piwarrie could be made to cheer them.

Makunaima, the Great Spirit, seeing their condition, sent two messengers, who appeared one day in their midst. No one had seen how they came, and could only suppose that they floated down from heaven. They were brothers, white men with shining faces, glorious to behold, the elder named Inchkeran, who seems to have been the principal, while the other was of so little importance that his name was not preserved.

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Inchkeran, seeing the condition of the Macusis, promised to help them, and calling upon a body of young men to follow, the two brothers set off in a westerly direction. Presently they came to a great forest, in which they began to search for a particular tree, that for a long time could not be found. At last, however, Inchkeran came to a place where only one great tree stood up, its crown spreading over a large stretch of country, to the exclusion of everything else. It was covered with fruit of all kinds, including bananas, papaws, cashews, capsicums, cobs of Indian corn, and even roots of cassava and yams. The trunk was so large that it took the party a week to chop it down, notwithstanding the skill of the two brothers with the stone axe. At length, however, it fell, and in falling scattered its fruit far and wide over forest and savannah. Soon the seeds germinated, and the roots grew to produce all the plants now in cultivation among the Indians.

Having performed this great task, the two brothers went farther west to a place on the Ireng river, where they set to work and dug

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a great hole in the ground. This being finished, the younger brother transformed himself into a monstrous labba, and retired within it to become the parent of all the game of that species. Inchkeran now brought together a bed of stones, on which he lay until they were transformed into men, whom he commanded to search for his brother, and then went on. These men, in accordance with his directions, went on searching for the great labba, but down to the present day no one has found it, although they often come upon small specimens of its progeny.

Inchkeran continued his journey until he disappeared at Roraima, whence he is expected to come again at some future time in all his glory, laden with a thousand good things for his people.

Samarang knew of this legend and used it for his purpose. It had been revealed to him that Inchkeran would soon be coming back; it was necessary, therefore, that his people should assemble to greet him. In the shed which served as a church was hung a portrait of King William the Fourth in his coro-

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nation robes ; this, Samarang said, was Inchkeran.

Allan attended his services, and noticed that the prophet read from a book, which on examining he found to be a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel in the Arawak language, which, of course, Samarang could not understand. That he was also unable to read was proved by his holding the book topsy-turvy on some occasions. Allan could understand but a few words of his service, for it was intoned in a peculiar manner, obviously copied from the conventional style of the Church of England curate, with some modifications. He told them on the authority of Makunaima that the end of the world was approaching, that all save a favoured few would be destroyed, that the white men were so wicked that none would survive, and that, instead, the favoured Indians would be transformed into glorified whites, and possess guns, axes, and everything they thought desirable.

To show his authority, Makunaima had given the prophet certain vouchers, which he distributed among his followers. These, Allan

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noticed, were pieces of printed paper taken from a bundle which Samarang had in his hut, among which were odd numbers of the *Times* and other newspapers once used by the traveller for drying his plants. What was to be the effect of carrying such vouchers the prophet did not say ; but he implied that the bearers of them would be specially blessed by Makunaima.

Allan looked upon all this as buffoonery rather than anything else, and when Samarang hinted at the great results he expected from it, he smiled to himself, but said nothing. Then the chief went on to speak of his intention to make himself ruler over all the Indian tribes, and asked his son-in-law whether he was willing to assist in the project. They would both become rich and great, have as many wives as they wished, and get tribute in the shape of game and other things desirable. He knew it would be useless to dwell upon the prophetic part of the business ; Allan knew this to be imposture, and his father-in-law saw that he knew it.

Allan shook his head at the proposition.

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What did the Indians want with a king? They were very comfortable in their present condition. Kings were supposed to exist for the benefit of the people they governed; but Samarang evidently looked upon the matter in another light. He had no idea whatever of posing as a benefactor; his wishes were all connected with plenty of women, plenty of meat, and a long succession of piwarrie feasts. No; Allan would have nothing to do with the matter, for he felt sure that he would land Samarang in difficulties.

This refusal prevented anything like cordiality between them, but the would-be king went on with his work. Presently he commenced the unheard-of practice of putting a screen before the entrance of his hut. Privacy is almost unknown among these people, and, therefore, such a thing was quite remarkable.

From the time when his doorway was thus closed Samarang appeared but rarely; he was too sacred a personage to show himself to any but a favoured few. Presents of game and other things were brought to him, and every word he spoke from behind the curtain of

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salempores was listened to with the utmost attention. On hearing him, the people flocked round to catch his oracular sentences. Sometimes there was apparently a conversation going on between the prophet and some other person ; this other was said to be Makunaima speaking. Allan remembered the ventriloquial contest which took place when he was sick, and put down the performance to a similar trick.

The burden of his prophecies was to the effect that the world was coming to an end in October following, towards the end of the dry season. Makunaima would destroy everything with fire ; all save the chosen few would be swept away like the dry grass of the savannah. Great waves of fire would roll across the ground, burn up the forests, lick the rivers dry, and destroy their villages and themselves if they did not follow him. But, if they accepted his mediation with Makunaima, they would be saved and brought out of the trouble ; each would become not only white in skin, but have all the riches of a white man. The Indians were the peculiar care of the Great Spirit, and when the earth was restored they

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would be the only people left. But they must not remain here; when the time came he would lead them to a pleasant valley abounding with game, where they would be quite safe amidst the universal destruction. They must hasten, for it was now July, near the end of the rainy season; a heavy drought would follow, and their friends must soon be gathered together from all parts of the country.

Makunaima had spoken, and during the following week messages were sent out to the different tribes. Some went to the rivers Berbice and Corentyne; others to the upper reaches of the Pomeroon, Waini, and Barima; and a third party to the Cuyuni and Masaruni. Each messenger carried a piece of paper as a proof of his authority, and he was told to call the tribes together at the base of Mount Roraima. They must bring plenty of cassava bread and barbecued meat, and it was hinted also that the prophet might be propitiated by a few handsome young girls or other presents. From "Roraima, the red-rocked, wrapped in clouds, the never-failing source of streams, where with daybreak night still prevails," the

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Great Spirit would appear and tell them what to do. Makunaima had already spoken through his prophet, and had sent these tokens as a sign of his good intentions.

The usual quiet of the Indian village was upset by these departures. Samarang never came forth now, but kept himself quite excluded, carrying on his supposed conversations with Makunaima before wondering audiences, who began to arrive from all parts of the savannah. Not Macusis alone, but Wapisianos and Arecunas came to hear the wonderful news, each party bringing its little present, until Samarang's hut was full of those things valued by the Indians, some of which could have been procured only in Georgetown. The handsomest girls were offered and accepted, regardless of the claims of the young men to whom some of them were betrothed, and ultimately a second hut had to be built to accommodate them all. These women were too valuable to be sent into the field; but as the prophet could get presents of whatever he wanted in the way of food, their labour became unnecessary.

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Allan watched this curious mania and wondered how it would end. For himself he determined to keep aloof, but he could do nothing to undeceive the people. It was not for him to say that his father-in-law was fooling them ; it would simply lead to his destruction. Even Yariko believed the story and stood in awe of the prophet.

Now he could see that preparations were being made for a long journey. All the women, save those shut up in Samarang's huts, were busy preparing large quantities of cassava bread, and Yariko was as active as the rest. She assumed as a matter of course that they would go with the others ; as a part of her father's household they were bound to follow him. Allan would have liked to remain behind for some reasons, but then, again, he was curious to know the result.

At last the day of departure arrived. The whole village turned out, every woman carrying a heavy suriana to the river-side, where an unusual number of canoes were waiting. The first part of the journey would be performed by water, and the frail craft were loaded until

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hardly room could be found for the people. All were eager to escape the great fire ; even the dogs crowded in and perched themselves on the top of the baggage, together with parrots, monkeys, and feathered stock. If their huts and everything else were to be destroyed, they must save whatever they could.

Having no canoe of his own, Allan and his wife occupied one of several belonging to Samarang, who came forth cloaked from head to foot in blue salem pores. His harem and food supply occupied four canoes, and the whole party made quite a procession as they paddled slowly westward up the stream. At night they encamped and slung their hammocks under the trees, which in the fine weather they were then having was by no means disagreeable. Here and there, however, the sandflies were troublesome, but the great pest was the kaburi, which raised a blister in every spot where its venomous proboscis was inserted. Allan wished for some other covering than a shirt when these flies invaded the camp, and almost choked himself by slinging his hammock to leeward of the smoky fire. Save

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for these pests, the journey by water was pleasant enough.

Now they could go no further by water, but must prepare themselves for a toilsome journey across the savannah. The women took up their heavy loads, which, although somewhat reduced on the voyage, were still weighty enough to bend them almost double, and commenced the march. Beyond their weapons the men carried nothing, yet even without encumbrance Allan often felt ready to drop with fatigue as he trudged along day after day in the scorching sun. But if he felt weary and footsore, how could his poor Yariko endure such a journey? There she was in the long line of women, her burden piled up above her head, and the cruel band apparently cutting into her brow at every step. He would have willingly relieved her of a part, but such a thing could not be. How pitiful! They had left their comfortable home, where everything had gone on so pleasantly, to follow a madman across this desert. Again he asked himself, How would all this end?

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When they camped at night Allan could see a dark weal across his wife's forehead; and probably it hurt him more than it did her. To Yariko it was a matter of course; to her husband, with his ingrained ideas of women's delicacy and tenderness, intolerable. He went so far as to offer to relieve her of part of her burden, but this she would not permit. He must be always ready to go hunting with the men, or to shoot a deer if they saw one. She would look after *her* duties; let him perform his.

CHAPTER XII

THE WHITE VALLEY

AT last, footsore and almost exhausted, the party arrived at their destination. It was certainly a beautiful place—a valley through which ran a clear stream bordered by trees. From the open grassy spot chosen for the camp the towering cliffs of Roraima could be seen in all their majesty. Like a gigantic castle it stood above a green slope, which looked blue in the distance when not obscured by mists. First came one great mount rising above another, until that which bore the great rock stood above the rest to a height of over five thousand feet; then the great precipice rose apparently without a break fifteen hundred feet into the heavens. As the fleecy clouds passed over its summit the walls looked black, but when they had gone and the sun shone full upon the cliffs, they glittered and made Allan

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think of the “crystal mountain” of which rumours had been heard by the old travellers in Guiana. From one part a veil-like waterfall shone in the light; a shining band near the top and a tapering cone of mist above the dense tangle of vegetation below. No wonder the Indians looked upon it as sacred; it was so grand, so inaccessible, and so mysterious.

In the valley a large number of people were already assembled to meet the prophet. The Arecunas, who lived in the neighbourhood, welcomed the party with their *Bakong baimong* (Good-day), at the same time pointing to Roraima and calling out pleasantly, *Matti, Roraima tau, Roraima tau!* (Look at our Roraima). All the conversation seemed to refer to the wonderful rock. If a Macusi spoke of the savannah with its deer, or of the river Rupununi with its shoals of fish, they would reply that it could not be as beautiful as their country, for there was no Roraima.

In hunting over the surrounding country, Allan could not but be charmed by its beauty. The grandeur of the cliffs, the clearness of the

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streams, and the wonderful variety of flowers, ferns, and mosses, awoke his latent instinct for the study of Nature. He thought such scenes worth all the pains and difficulties of the long journey. How different was this from the mummery then going on in the beautiful valley ; he could not endure the crowd. No, he would spend his days in this natural paradise. It was bad enough to go home at night and witness the assembly round Samarang's hut and the drinking of piwarrie.

But the slopes of the great mountain were very cold, and he often wished for a suit of warm clothing. When the sun shone it was pleasant, but even now, in the middle of the dry season, clouds often stood above the great rock, cutting winds blew, and rain fell almost every day. The streams were exceedingly cold, and under the cliffs the bushes were always dripping with moisture. Barefooted, he found it hard to walk over rocks and slippery boulders, and with no covering but a ragged shirt he was quite unprepared for such a climate. But, for the sake of being alone, he nevertheless often wandered in the direction

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of the slope, which, on account of the sacred character of the rock, was carefully avoided by the others.

Day after day fresh arrivals from all parts of the country swelled the multitude which had assembled in Beckeranta, the White Valley, as Samarang called his place of rendezvous. A large number of huts had been erected, until it became almost like a fair, with one great "show" in the centre, the house of the prophet. This was closed, as the hut in the Macusi village had been, and near it, both morning and evening, the crowd gathered to hear Makunaima and the prophet conversing. Everything that was said was listened to with the greatest awe, and the slightest suggestion of a command carried out at once. Every new party brought a gift of some kind, and ultimately the harem of Samarang contained over a dozen wives.

When the assembly was complete, orders were given to hold a great piwarrie feast. Great logs were hollowed out to form troughs, and presently every woman was busy baking bread and chewing it. The drink being ready,

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an orgie began, compared with which that at Allan's initiation was nothing. Night after night drinking, dancing, and singing went on from sunset, and by morning men and women were lying about like hogs in a sty. Now and again, also, there were quarrels and fights, and the sun often rose upon scenes too horrible for description.

Allan tried to induce Yariko to remain away from these orgies, but only partially succeeded. Like women in civilised nations, she was wedded to the customs and fashions of her people, and although she drank but little herself, she willingly helped in the distribution. At the risk of appearing singular, Allan remained in his hut, and when he found it hard to sleep for the noise, he took down his hammock and slung it among the trees at a distance. How pitiful it all was! Could he not do something? He thought over this question night after night, but could find no answer. Who was he to think of trying to circumvent such a cunning impostor? The least antagonism on his part would be fatal to himself, for he stood alone among a thousand

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fanatics, who would tear him to pieces if he said a word against Samarang. He could only watch the course of events and take care of himself and his wife.

If we were telling a story of the usual romantic type, we should make our hero perform impossibilities. Single-handed, he would be able to overcome the impostor, rescue the girls from his clutches, and turn the current of feeling into other channels. But in real life such things do not happen. A man is the creature of circumstances, and should he attempt anything quixotic, he will almost certainly fail and perish without doing good to any one.

Allan was not heroic; he was simply an average young man of a type which can be found represented in any part of the world. He held the common-sense view that for him to incur the risk of martyrdom for an idea would be little better than madness. If by dying he could save Yariko from some immediate danger, he would have been content to risk everything, but to interfere with the false prophet at the present stage would help no

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one. All he could do was to think and watch. He was sure that trouble would come in some way, but how he could hardly conjecture at present. These poor ignorant people had dug up all their cassava, and certainly, in view of the impending destruction, had made no provision for the future, and here they were wasting it day after day in preparing this vile drink. What would happen when it was all gone, and when want made itself felt? Little game was to be had in the neighbourhood, for the animals had been disturbed by the crowd ; at the best of times the district gave little to the huntsman.

Keeping his eyes open, Allan saw that among the blind followers of the prophet there were a few who did not believe in him. The leader of the opposition, as it might be called, was a young Arecuna, whose prospective wife had been given to Samarang, and who naturally felt a little sore about the matter. In walking round the huts one morning and gazing upon the pitiful scene, Allan came upon the little party of conspirators talking quietly, and conspicuous from the fact that they were not

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drunk and sprawling about like the others. As they saw him approaching they became silent, and although he tried to enter into a conversation, they professed not to know the Macusi language. It was quite evident that they looked upon the son-in-law of Samarang with suspicion. Allan could not, of course, in view of their distrust, say anything ; nevertheless he took notice of their faces and watched them carefully. On several other occasions he saw them together, and from one or two words they let drop, he suspected that a conspiracy was forming.

Samarang had accomplished the first part of his scheme, by assembling the people and raising himself to the position of an autocrat, but how was he going to keep them together ? When they found that his predictions were false, everything would be at an end, and he must have been well aware of that. Something must be done, or they would tire of waiting for the sign. Makunaima had not appeared, although the day fixed for his descent from Roraima had passed. The young men were already discontented ; he must find some way of quieting them.

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The grand drinking bout had been going on for three weeks when Samarang hit upon a scheme which could only have come from the brain of a madman. Suddenly, at midnight, when nearly all of the men were drunk, he appeared for the first time in their midst, and called them together to hear the latest communication from the Great Spirit.

Makunaima had spoken. He did not wish his children to be destroyed in the great fire. He loved them, and would raise them to higher positions than the whites, who would all be exterminated. But they all knew that the white man possessed many things which the Indian loved. He had guns, powder and shot, axes and knives, and, above all, rum. Every one who wished to obtain these things must obey the commands of the Great Spirit given through the mouth of his prophet. If they did so they would become not only white but glorified beings, and rule over the cowards who were wanting in faith. These would be born again, but first they must be killed. Then, at the coming full moon the bodies of the slain would rise, and as glorified kings come

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down from the summit of Roraima to rule over the earth.

Long ago, the prophet said, Makunaima had sent a great flood upon the earth, which destroyed all save a few of his chosen people ; now he would send a great fire to burn up the world. Those who had assembled in the White Valley had been chosen to escape destruction, but it was not with poor Indians that Makunaima intended to replenish the earth, but with the faithful ones who were willing to die.

The assembly listened eagerly to his words, but no one quite understood what he meant. When he suggested that they should kill each other a thrill of horror rushed through their muddled brains.

As they hesitated, he began to taunt them with their fear of death ; if Makunaima could not raise them up again, would he not be a poor mortal like any one of them ? Let them hasten to obey the command ; let each take up his war club and hasten the glorious work.

So saying, he snatched a club that was hanging from one of the rafters and brandished it over their heads. Before him was a great

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piwarrie trough, over which crouched a dozen men, who had been drinking so freely that some of their heads hung over the liquor. Suddenly rushing towards them with his club uplifted, he brought the weapon down upon the head of the first, following this up quickly until a row of dead men with bleeding skulls hung over the trough. Then taking up a calabash he dipped it into the mixture, calling upon them to come and taste.

A large number responded, and soon the whole shed was in confusion. Macusis, Arecunas, Wapisianos, Acawoios and Arawaks were soon fighting with each other. All their suppressed enmities came to the front, and, like tigers who had tasted blood, they revelled in the fight. But not only did the tribes slay each other; fathers killed their sons, and brothers fought until in many cases all the men of a family lay dead. Every one was mad for the time. Without discrimination, friends and foes struck right and left at each other. Women and children fell before they could escape, and soon the large shed was filled with dead and dying.

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A few of those who had not been drinking so heavily escaped, but nearly all the younger men, to the number of four hundred, lost their lives in this horrible massacre. As for Samarang he took care to save himself; his faith in the glorious resurrection was not strong enough to let him run the risk of remaining to see the end. Quietly returning to his own house, he shut himself up as usual, to await further developments. His scheme was working well, for the stronger men were dead; he could now easily manage the women and children.

But there was still a body of Arecunas who had not taken part in the fight, and as Allan was gazing upon the horrible scene in the morning he heard them uttering threats of vengeance upon Samarang. Some of their friends had been killed; if they came to life again, well and good, if not, they were bound by all their customs to obtain satisfaction. But not only would they kill the prophet; all his family must also suffer for his crimes. They would wait until the full moon; after that nothing but blood would satisfy them.

Allan was thunderstruck as he pieced these

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mutterings together. The bolt had indeed fallen, and he, as well as poor Yariko, would have to look out for their safety. He spoke to his wife, but she would not hear anything against her father; what he had prophesied would come true, and then everybody would be happy and comfortable again. Allan told her it was impossible, but she almost rebuked him for his want of faith. Did he not believe in the Great Spirit? Was not Makunaima all-powerful? Had he not heard the voice? How could the promise fail?

What could Allan say to all this? Could he proclaim her father to be an impostor? He must certainly be prepared for a catastrophe at the time of the full moon, and meanwhile be on the alert to save himself and Yariko.

CHAPTER XIII

VENGEANCE

A FORTNIGHT would pass before the full moon and the promised resurrection. The dead were buried and the wounded lay in their hammocks, hardly knowing whether they ought to curse the prophet, or wish themselves among those who were to return with glorified bodies. Day after day passed to see a sullen gloom creep over the assemblage. The nights were quiet; the piwarrie drinking and dancing had come to an end. The men who survived collected in groups and discussed the situation, the few malcontents now making a great impression. Something would have to be done, but all agreed to wait for the full moon.

Allan wanted Yariko to go away with him, but this she refused to do. She was an obedient wife, but when the choice lay between

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her husband and father, the latter must have the preference. Allan would not leave her, so he also must remain, although he knew only too well that this meant almost certain death. Like some of the others, Yariko was expecting the miracle to take place ; she would not leave before the night of the full moon.

To retain his influence over the assembly, which he saw had been somewhat weakened, Samarang felt it necessary to do something. The great conflagration which he had foretold must take place ; he therefore stole forth in the night and set fire to the savannah beyond the valley. The flames crept quickly among the dried sedges, and almost before he could steal back into his hut the heavens were ruddy with the reflection. The people ran to the pass which connected the White Valley with the burning plain, and carefully removed everything likely to lead the flames in their direction, which, however, was very little, because the mountain-stream occupied the greater part of the avenue between the bare rocks. The people watched what many believed to be the fulfilment of Samarang's prediction, for the

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whole country to the east was blazing, and heaven itself appeared to be on fire. Only Roraima and their own valley remained untouched by the fire, and this almost restored their former confidence.

Allan climbed a hill where he could see that the fire was extending to the east as far as the eye could reach, but he also recognised the fact that it had commenced just outside the pass. Here was another difficulty added to the others, for the people were already on the verge of starvation. Every animal would be burnt or driven away, and game be entirely wanting over the whole savannah to the eastward.

Next morning the country outside the pass was blackened, and, as the wind blew in the direction where the fire still blazed, it carried up great clouds of flakes which whirled round and round in eddies or rose to meet the clouds which extended over the whole country. The Indians went forth in search of dead animals, of which they found a good number, some cooked ready for eating, others charred to a cinder. This pleased them for the time, and

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on every hand favourable opinions of the prophet were expressed.

But this feeling did not last long. Next morning food was again wanting; all their cassava had been eaten or wasted in making piwarrie, and only the large supply which had been given to Samarang remained. Not a wild animal could be found, save on the slopes of the sacred mountain, where they dared not go. Allan, however, being quite free from this superstitious feeling, succeeded in obtaining enough meat for himself and his wife, although it might only be the rat-like cavy, the taste of which was sickening at other times.

Some of the people now congregated round Samarang's hut and clamoured for food, of which they knew he had plenty. The prophet told them to thank the Great Spirit for saving them from the fire. Did they not see the ruddy glare on the bounds of the horizon, which showed that their villages were doomed to destruction? If he had not led them to a place of refuge, where would they be now? They must have faith in him and all would be well.

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Words however could not feed the hungry, and the people went away murmuring. Not a cake of cassava would he give to any one of them save Yariko, who divided her father's small allowance among the famished little ones. Samarang cared nothing if half of them died of starvation ; probably in his madness he thought the others would be all the more cringing. He had just enough food to last his family for a few weeks longer ; if he gave away any he also might suffer. A few who lived in the neighbourhood left for their homes, where these were to the west of Roraima, but those from the savannah had no places of refuge. How could they travel across the blackened plain without a supply of food, and what could they do at the end of their journey ? All their villages were destroyed, the game driven off or killed, and if what the prophet said were true, the rivers were dried up.

Over five hundred people waited for the night of the full moon. If their friends came to life again, well and good, if not, destruction would come upon the false prophet and all his family. No attempts were now made to hide

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the feelings of the conspirators, who by this time formed a very strong party.

They were naturally suspicious of Allan, who, feeling that a crisis was approaching, tried to find out their plans. He often came upon parties who were evidently discussing the matter, but as he appeared they became silent. The night preceding that of the full moon, however, a large body assembled in the hut of an Arecuna chief, and by putting his ear against the wall of thatch Allan caught sufficient to understand their intentions. Some were quite sceptical as to the resurrection of their friends, but a few half believed that it might still take place. They would watch for three nights, and then, if nothing happened, a selected party would fall upon Samarang, while others would go to his hut, take away the provisions, and kill all his wives and children. As for the white man and his wife, two men were specially selected to kill them ; and warned to be careful not to let the stranger escape, for he must be concerned in the trickery of Samarang, however he might appear to have remained neutral.

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Allan crept away and got home quietly, to again do his best to make Yariko understand their danger. But she still believed that everything would come right, and that the prophet would be vindicated by Makunaima. Was she not her father's daughter? Could she desert him? No, she would warn him of his danger, but more than this she would not do. If her husband escaped now, she could not go with him, for as long as her father lived he had the first claim on her obedience.

The evening of the promised resurrection came at last, and every one assembled on a pile of boulders, from which the mighty cliffs could be observed. As the sun threw its parting rays over the top and sank behind, the glorious moon rose and flooded the eastern wall with her pale beams. The night was still, and only a fleecy cloud hung like a veil over the summit. From this they looked to see their friends come forth, but hour after hour passed, and save for the voices of one or two owls, or goat-suckers, not a sound broke the stillness. One mist passed to leave the great rock shining in the bright moonlight

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like a silver castle ; then a cloth was spread as it were over this immense table, and the walls underneath became dark and gloomy. Every change was anxiously watched, in the hope that it had a meaning. But hour after hour passed ; the clouds took on a thousand shapes, but none of them could be identified as human. Then the moon and stars paled, and almost suddenly the gold and ruddy tints of dawn flickered upon the walls.

The crowd rose and hurried to the prophet, exclaiming, "Why did you tell us lies ? Where are our fathers and brothers ? "

Samarang was alarmed, but not yet prepared to do more than temporise. "Makunaima is trying you," he said, "he wishes to see whether you are worthy of his blessings. Perhaps he will restore your friends to-night, but certainly they will come to-morrow if you are good. I hear that you have been listening to some among you who are my enemies ; Makunaima says that you must destroy them."

This caused a division in the camp, but the malcontents were the stronger party. Most of the young believers had been killed, leaving

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only a few old men and boys, besides those who were wounded and not yet fully recovered. The enemies of Samarang stood at bay, and a truce was agreed to until after the third night.

The second night passed like the first, but on the third Samarang came forth and took his place on the top of a great boulder in the midst of the crowd. He said nothing, but remained, like the others, watching the mists and clouds, and apparently expecting every moment that his prophecy would be fulfilled. After midnight a low murmur could be heard through the assemblage, but nothing happened ; their passions were slowly rising. Allan, who had taken his place on the edge of the crowd with Yariko, armed with his bow, and carrying the household cutlass in his hand, now grasped Yariko by the arm, and forced her to come with him into the thicket which lined the stream, from whence she continued to watch the mountain while he kept his eye upon the crowd.

As the morning glow appeared in the east, the conspirators, who had kept together, began

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to move, and crowd round the prophet. Mutterings could now be heard, immediately followed by loud cries, and then by one tremendous howl of rage.

Samarang rose from his seat and uttered the word "Makunaima," but before he could say anything more of his attempted excuse, a powerful Arecuna had dashed out his brains.

For a moment a hush fell upon the assemblage. Some looked as if they expected some punishment to fall upon the murderer, but as nothing happened, a great wailing cry went up; a cry of despair. All hopes of seeing their friends and relations again were gone; the world was desolate; their prophet had proved false, and Makunaima had deserted them. Whatever could they do?

Every one had been wronged, and all cried out for vengeance, "Kill the family of the deceiver; let not one escape."

Already the conspirators were among the women, whom they struck down one after the other if connected in any way with Samarang. Allan had been on the alert, and as he saw his father-in-law fall dead he dragged Yariko

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away into the bushes. She seemed paralysed with terror, and he had almost to carry her.

Where to go he hardly knew. The only cover was along the stream, which, as we have said, flowed out of the valley through a narrow pass. They could not escape in that direction, but must try the other. The avengers were already searching the bushes where they had entered ; they must hurry along or there would be no possibility of escape.

Dragging the now submissive Yariko, Allan plunged into the shallow stream at a place where the bushes formed a close tunnel. From thence began an arduous climb over rocks and boulders, and up steep places, where in the wet season great cataracts leaped, but which now were hung with festoons of green slime. Stumbling, falling, now in a pool up to their middles, and later in shallows of but a few inches, they hurried along. Above their heads the bushes interlaced in such a manner as to be impenetrable, and from them hung ragged strips of moss, which dragged across their shoulders as if trying to hamper them in their progress. Everywhere the water was intensely

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cold, but Allan was too excited to feel this ; it was a race for life over obstacles which on other occasions would have been considered impassable.

Allan had instinctively clung to his weapons, which was fortunate, for how could they have got along without the cutlass. In some places the network of branches was so close that they could not even crawl through without first cutting a passage, and in others the rocks were so steep that steps had to be cut in the soft sandstone.

At first the cries of the multitude could be heard, but as they passed mile after mile in their toilsome journey, all was silence, save for the trickling of the rill as it fell over a succession of small precipices. Would they succeed in escaping ? Allan had not time to think ; they must hurry on. No matter that their feet were cut with the stones, and their knees abraded by climbing, they must continue their flight. The avengers would probably track them as they did the wild animals ; perhaps they were already following in their footsteps. Now and again Allan glanced over his shoulder, and at

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the same time looked at his bow and arrows. These were, however, poor weapons with which to defend his life ; only one had an iron point for deer-shooting, the others were but sticks hardened in the fire. At close quarters the cutlass might be used, but he could only hope to defend himself against one man. Flight alone could bring safety, and however tired they might feel, rest was too dangerous to be thought of.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAMOUDI-KENAIMA

HOUR after hour passed, and mile after mile of climbing was performed. Morning was followed by noon, and that again passed to find them still struggling along without seeing a place where they could rest. At last, however, they came upon an opening, where a border of dry sand on the bank of the stream allowed them to lie down for a few minutes.

Feeling a little more confidence, Allan now embraced his wife, and said he hoped they had escaped their enemies. Yariko shook her head; her people would hunt all over the country, even if it took them a year. They might as well be killed first as last. Although tired nature made her lie down, her eyes wandered to the passage by which they had come, and up the walls that lined the little opening,

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in expectation of seeing the enemy at any moment.

Now they began to feel cramped and chilly, for the sun was going down, and the little warmth he had poured into the sand during his course overhead gave way to the chilly damp which rises from such localities at night. They must move on to a place where perhaps a shelter might be obtained in some hollow rock, for if rain did not fall, the dew in the open would be very heavy.

Presently they went on again, and almost immediately came to a place where the walls were uneven, and where a few gnarled bushes would permit of climbing. Allan cautiously made his way to the top, and looking down into the valley far away, he saw that the huts were blazing, and that the people were going off. As he gazed the end of the file passed from his sight, and the White Valley was deserted. From his elevated position he also saw that the cliffs of Roraima were very near, and he hurried down with the intention of going further up the stream to see where it ended before finally settling down for the night.

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Under the wall they might perhaps find a shelter, if it were only to leeward of a great boulder.

This reconnaissance had taken up but a minute or two, and he hurried down to find Yariko shivering with the cold. He took her hand, and together they went on again until, just as the light grew dim, they came to an archway from which the stream flowed.

Before them rose the great wall of Roraima, and on either hand frowning precipices. Through the tunnel lay their only hope of shelter, and they entered to find that it opened out into a cave, which, though but dimly lighted, was not altogether dark, for there was a crack in the wall above, which showed against the now black interior as a pale line.

Night fell almost immediately, and tired, hungry, and cold, the pair sank down upon the dry sand, embracing each other to, as far as possible, warm their chilled bodies.

For a time they were too cold to sleep, and Allan's mind wandered from the events of the day to their present position. He had certainly observed that the Indians were leaving,

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but had they all left? Yariko said that one or two would search until the pair were found. Were they hunting them still? Had they found their way through the channel? and would they search the cave? He could not tell; whatever happened in the morning they must sleep if possible.

Presently, as they lay in each other's arms, a little warmth began to spread over their chilled limbs. Yariko did not repel his embrace, but rather held him tightly as she felt a glow stealing over her body. Now Allan knew why the inhabitants of cold climates were more affectionate than those of the tropics; in the one case warmth was grateful, in the other disagreeable. With a cold wind blowing outside, families huddled together round the fire, and felt it pleasant to be near each other; in Guiana they sat apart in the open gallery, and allowed the cool breeze to circulate between them.

How Allan wished for a fire! With naked skins, under a temperature of about sixty degrees, it was hard indeed to keep their limbs from becoming cramped. Fortunately, the

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floor was dry, and they were free from the cutting wind which blew round and over the great rock.

At last they fell asleep, to awake as a ray of light from the rising sun came through the slit and slightly warmed their chilled limbs. They tried to rise but could not stand, for their legs were dead to all feeling. Even their arms were stiff and painful, until little by little they had restored the circulation by rubbing each other.

However, Yariko soon recovered, and helped Allan to his feet. Being more accustomed to go without clothing than the white man, the cold affected her in a less degree ; she therefore led him to the mouth of the cave, where the morning sun warmed him a little and made walking possible.

They had eaten nothing for over twenty-four hours, and something must be done to obtain food. Allan, therefore, took up his bow and arrows, and Yariko the cutlass, with which they wearily went down the gully until they came to the place where the rocks could be scaled.

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Arrived at the top, they looked down upon the valley, where nothing but a few blackened heaps showed the site of the populous camp of yesterday. Not the trace of a human being was visible, but both knew well that their enemies might still be lurking in the bushes or behind the great boulders. At the same time, they were equally certain that few would have the temerity to come so near to the sacred rock, and Allan hoped that this would tend to their safety.

Food must be obtained if it were only a stinking cavy, and Yariko began poking about the bushes in hopes of finding one of their hiding places, while Allan was equally on the alert for birds. But for a long time nothing eatable could be found, and even then they had to appease their hunger with the central spire of a palm. It was certainly refreshing ; as refreshing and about as satisfying as a raw turnip to a hungry plough-boy. But they could not live on "palm cabbage" ; something else must be obtained.

To scramble over and between the rocks was very hard work, and their stiff limbs soon

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began to give way. Suddenly, however, Allan uttered a cry ; he saw a plant scrambling over the bushes which he recognised at once. Yes, there were the divided leaves and prickly stems of the bramble, and borne upon it were clusters of the fruit he had loved so well when a boy. How had it come there ? No matter, here it was, and calling Yariko he picked some of the blackberries and handed them to her, at the same time letting a few dissolve on his parched tongue. They were delicious, for nothing is so refreshing to the weary as a juicy fruit, slightly acid.

Revived by this unexpected dessert before dinner, they continued their hunt for meat, the appetite for which was by no means allayed. Several hours passed, and they had wandered down the slope, until, almost worn out, they sat down on a fallen tree. It was hollow, and Yariko had peeped into both ends in the faint hope of finding an acourie, but her poking with the cutlass led to no result. As they sat quietly down, however, her quick ears caught the sound of scratching. She bent down to the log, and her eyes brightened as she

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whispered to Allan that there was an acourie beneath them. At once they took their places at the two ends of the log and Allan poked one of his arrows into his end, on which Yariko saw the head of the animal at the other. But the creature saw its danger and retreated, on which both apertures were plugged with stones. With the cutlass Allan cut holes at intervals, through which he drove sticks, finally shutting up the acourie in a small space, where it could be speared with an arrow.

To kindle a fire did not take very long, for Yariko was accustomed to the drill-like sticks, and soon the pleasant odour of roast meat made them feel all the more hungry. Never, Allan thought, had he enjoyed such a meal before ; it put new life into him. No longer did he think of the Indians who might be on the watch ; they would surely escape once food could be obtained. What ought they to do ? The savannah was now a blackened desert, to pass which without provisions was impossible. And then, how would they fare if they reached an Indian village ? No doubt the Macusis would be as ready to kill them as the Arecunas.

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In the other direction there were forests and rivers, with game and fish, but their enemies stood in the way. From the Masaruni had come several parties of the deluded followers of the prophet, and those who had not seen him would certainly hear of the escape of the white man. His beard and the colour of his hair would betray him at once. They must remain for the present on the slope of Roraima; perhaps when the search had been given up, they might get away into some deserted part of the country, where they could live alone.

Having finished their meal they looked about for a place where a shelter might be erected, for the cave, although apparently the safest place, was difficult of access and uncomfortable. They were now at some distance from Roraima and hoped to find a warm valley, where something like a home might be established. A little after midday they found such a spot, and in a sheltered nook between two rocks soon cleared a space and covered it in with a thatch of palm leaves.

On a bed of leaves, with a fire beside them, they lay down for the night, and in the

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morning woke much refreshed. After making a breakfast off the remains of the acourie, Allan went forth to hunt, leaving Yariko to search for materials to make two rough hammocks, of which they felt much in need. Towards afternoon he shot a young deer, which he brought home with much difficulty, to find his wife peeling some palm leaves beside the fire and looking almost as if she were comfortably settled.

A smile appeared upon her face as she saw the load he bore on his shoulders ; now they would be provided with meat for three or four days, and he need not risk going out again during that time. For they both knew it was a risk ; some of the avengers might be still watching the neighbourhood, and if they came upon his trail death was almost certain. Here between these two rocks they might hope to escape observation, for their fire was hidden under the shed and its smoke well dispersed before it got above the level of their hiding-place.

At last they had something like a home, and here they hoped to remain for a month or two.

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Allan sat down and watched Yariko netting the hammocks, which would add so much to their comfort, and he began to feel quite relieved after the strain of the last few months. He also was busy, for he wanted more arrows, and as the proper kind of reed was wanting, he had to fashion them as best he could with split palm stems.

A fortnight passed happily, Allan going out as occasion required, but never seeing the least sign of an enemy. But one day this feeling of security was suddenly banished, and again they had to fly for their lives.

Yariko had accompanied him on a hunting excursion, and they went a little nearer to the White Valley than usual. Suddenly Allan was startled by a cry from his wife, and running towards her he saw that she was pointing into the bushes, where the under-growth was beaten down as if by the body of some large crawling monster. Allan thought it was probably the trail of boa, but Yariko whispered in his ear the significant word "*Camoudi-Kenaima.*"

Yariko seemed to be thunderstruck. As she

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uttered the name of the most horrible avenger among the Indian tribes Allan shuddered, and a cold thrill went down his back. He took the cutlass from his wife's hand and prepared to defend himself, but no enemy appeared. Yet he must be in the neighbourhood, for the marks of his presence were quite recent. Allan saw that they had not the wavy outline of those made by the passage of a real camoudi or boa-constrictor. And he could only be here for one purpose—to kill the last remaining members of the false prophet's family. The burden of vengeance had almost certainly been laid upon one man, and he could not be far away.

All the stories of kenaimas he had ever heard rushed through Allan's mind. There were two kinds, both of which took upon them the characters of the beasts they personated ; the tiger (jaguar) killed his victim with a club in imitation of the stroke of the paw of that animal, while the camoudi (boa) performed the same deadly work by strangling. Sometimes the kenaima followed his victim for hundreds of miles and awaited his opportunity for months

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or years. A man who had wronged another up the Demerara river fled to Georgetown, but finding that his enemy had become a kenaima and was following him, he went up the Essequebo and far away into Brazil. But the avenger was on his track and bided his time. His victim was found dead on the bank of the Rio Negro, with his bowels drawn forth and knotted, and his tongue poisoned so that it swelled and hung from the mouth. But the kenaima did not escape. The friends of the murdered man found the body and poisoned the entrails. When, therefore, in accordance with the custom, the kenaima came a few nights later to taste the carrion, he could only make his way for a short distance into the bush, to die also. They would endure every privation while on the track of their victims ; go without food for days rather than lose an opportunity. Gaunt, haggard, and starved, the kenaima crawled through the bushes until perhaps the man went out hunting alone. Not a leaf stirred, not a twig cracked, as he stealthily crept behind. Then, a blow on the head with the club, or a pair of sinewy arms

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round the neck, did the work, and justice was executed.

Yes, this was Indian justice, and, after all, it had its good side. In the absence of all legal authority, something else was necessary to punish crime and protect the community. By rendering it incumbent upon every member of a family to avenge its wrongs, a murderer could hardly ever escape. The manner of carrying out these executions was certainly odious, and the extending of it to cover innocent members of the family was as certainly wrong, but more civilised nations than the Indians of South America have punished children for the sins of their fathers.

Allan felt it to be very hard that he should have to suffer for the wrong committed by his father-in-law; when he had tried his utmost to discountenance his falsehoods from the beginning. But it was useless to think of that now; they must fly at once. Perhaps the man was even now watching them from behind some rock; so many lay about in every direction. If they were followed their home would be unsafe; the only hiding-place was

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the cave, and that was far away. Dare they go home for their hammocks? Better not; perhaps on the morrow he would go alone if nothing happened.

But they must not remain, for here was Yariko trembling and almost unable to move. To her the kenaima was something more than human—a mysterious being with supernatural powers, from which they could hardly hope to escape. She had never heard of any one outwitting him ; they were fated to die ; why therefore strive against destiny? She stood as if fascinated by the reptile whose character had been assumed.

CHAPTER XV

IN PERIL

ALLAN took Yariko by the arm and dragged her away. She went submissively but without effort. When he spoke, her answers were vague and meaningless ; for the time she was almost paralysed in mind and body. Which way should they go ? Any one of these clumps of bushes might hide the human reptile. If they wandered about in the open he might see them, and if under cover they might stumble upon him. Instinctively Allan moved in the direction of the cave, his eyes wandering and trying to pierce the numerous coverts which lay everywhere around. Nothing could be done until he had put his wife in safety ; afterwards he would have time to think.

The way was very difficult and long, for Yariko could only walk when drawn along

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almost by force. Not that she resisted ; her almost cataleptic state prevented her from opposing his efforts or assisting them. At last, however, they arrived at the edge of the gully, where they had climbed from it on the former occasion. Taking a final look round the stretch of country to the east, where not the least sign of human presence was visible, Allan began to descend, holding Yariko carefully, to prevent her slipping down the steep and slimy rock.

At last they were once more in the cave, which appeared almost cheerful as the sunlight poured through the slit in the rocks. Yariko sunk on the dry sand where he placed her, and crouching down in the usual sitting position of her people, with her head hanging forward and her eyes fixed, she looked as if dead and even prepared for burial. Here was a complication ; Allan could hardly leave her while she remained like this, nor could she do anything to protect herself. If he went forth alone to hunt, how could he be otherwise than anxious ? The kenaima might easily kill her during his absence. If he took her with him

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how could he search for game? Even here he felt that they were in great danger. At the place where they had descended to the stream the green slime had been scraped away in several places, and twigs bent down so that they showed the under surfaces of their leaves. No Indian would miss such plain evidences of the direction they had gone, and if they had been followed the kenaima might even now be close by.

Taking the cutlass in his hand he peeped through the tunnel, and, seeing nothing, passed out as far as the mouth, where he looked up at the two rocks which formed the walls of the gully. But not a sign of life was there, and though he strained his ears for the sound of scrambling or splashing in the shallow water, nothing but the ripple of the stream and the distant roar of the numerous waterfalls could be heard.

Now that he was up here he thought of the cold ; it was brought forcibly to his notice by a somewhat bleak wind which blew along the side of the great rock. They might at least try to be more comfortable than on that first

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occasion, when their limbs were so much cramped. He thereupon gathered as many dry sticks as he could find in the neighbourhood and threw them down upon the border of the stream. Then it struck him that a torch would be useful, as he saw a hyawa bush growing near. He cut a few sticks and finally, giving an anxious glance in every direction, he descended.

They had eaten nothing that day, but when Yariko mechanically kindled a fire and they were crouched near it, Allan felt almost comfortable. But he knew that they could not hide here altogether ; he must go hunting or starve. They were like rats in a hole ; to remain safely meant certain death from hunger, to wander in search of food was a terrible risk. Could he leave his wife, to perhaps find her strangled on his return ? Was there not perhaps a more secure hiding-place beyond that other tunnel through which the stream entered their cave ? He would see.

Taking up one of the hiawa torch-sticks which had been partially dried near the fire, he lit it and proceeded to enter the second

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tunnel. It was very low, and he had to bend almost double for a few yards, but beyond that the roof became higher, and then a second cavern opened out, of which only a small portion was illumined by the dim, smoky light. He dared not go very far in case the torch went out, and on account of his anxiety for the safety of his wife, he hurried back just as the green wood smouldered and went out.

Here was at least another hiding-place, to which they might retreat in case of extreme need, and then perhaps Yariko might be safe while he went hunting.

He found her cowering over the fire and looking a little more composed. Night had fallen, and the dull glow of the few twigs but partially lit up the cavern, leaving the entrance in total darkness. Even in her mazed condition Yariko had taken care to place the fire away from the centre, so that it could not be seen from outside.

But the passage was nevertheless open, and before sitting down Allan went forth, looked up at the dark sky and intently listened. A strong wind was blowing, and it drove a cold

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drizzle in his face. He could see nothing, and even if the kenaima had been approaching the wind would have prevented his light footsteps from being heard. Allan shivered, and again crawled back to warm his chilled body over the fire.

Nevertheless, he did not feel safe. Their enemy might come upon them while they slept. If Yariko had been like her usual self he could have arranged with her to watch, but under the circumstances he was worse than alone. Could he alone watch the whole night? Tired nature said no. He was already worn out by anxiety, and dared not trust himself, although at that moment he felt as if sleep were impossible. In the bed of the stream were many rounded pebbles; these he would pile up at the entrance to form a light barricade, which would fall down with a clatter if any one attempted to pass. After almost closing the passage in this way he felt more confidence and could lie down beside the flickering embers with less anxiety.

Soon they would be in total darkness, for the quantity of wood he could gather was too

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small to last the night. But the chill had been taken off from the cavern, and perhaps they would be safer in the dark. At the same time, Allan almost feared to sleep here; would not the inner cave be more safe? But even there the kenaima might follow them, and he would not hear the rattling of the pebbles. However, he could barricade the second tunnel, and thus be doubly secure. Yes, he would do that when the fire went out.

Allan sat up listening. His ears were strained until he fancied the pebbles were rattling. One slipped and rolled down off the pile. He grasped his cutlass in his right hand prepared for the horrible snake-man, whose shadow he expected every moment to see at the entrance. He could not remain here as long as there was a more secure retreat.

Now the fire sank down to a few blackened ashes, through which only small ruddy spots could be seen, and he lighted a torch. Taking Yariko by the hand, he led her to their inner chamber, and while she held the light he erected a second barricade.

By the aid of the torch he now saw that this

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cave was much larger than the other ; so large that he could see only a small portion. The stream flowed through the centre, and the floor on either side was quite dry. For safety he would have liked to retire to the farthest part, but when he thought of the absolute darkness that would prevail when his torch went out, he passed to the left of the entrance close to the wall, looking for the softest and most comfortable resting-place. Presently he came to a pile of stones, which appeared as if built up as a covering for something. The shape was that of an irregular oblong, and on the top was one of those flakes of sandstone which, under the influence of sun and rain, peel off from Roraima. With the aid of his cutlass he prised this up until it slipped over the side, and then brought the torch as near as possible, to see if anything was within.

At first there appeared to be nothing but a heap of rubbish that might have once been a pegall or basket, but as he pulled this covering aside he felt that there were some solid masses, which, as he moved them, gave out a metallic ring. But before he could examine further the

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torch ceased to flare, and notwithstanding all his efforts, turned from a ruddy point to utter blackness.

Nothing was left but to lie down here ; they dared not move for fear of getting lost in the unknown recesses. Presently Allan was lying down, with his left arm clasping his wife, and the cutlass close to his right. Both were thoroughly worn out, and in a few minutes fell asleep.

When they woke Allan hardly knew where he was until the soft tones of Yariko assured him that she was safe, and brought to mind the events of the previous day. They must go forth and see if it was yet morning, but he must be very careful, for possibly the cave might extend for miles. If they missed their bearings they would be lost. Where was the wall ? He could not find it, and taking Yariko by the left hand he held the right straight before him and moved very slowly. But the Indian woman knew more than he ; for as she instinctively felt that they were wandering into the unknown parts of the cavern, she drew him back and took the lead, with the result that they almost

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immediately touched the wall. By keeping this to the right they soon arrived at the break, where a current of cold air indicated the entrance.

It did not take long to remove the barricade and get into the tunnel, from the mouth of which they could see that the sun had risen. Allan looked carefully round, but saw no signs of the enemy ; the first pile of stones was also intact.

Food must be obtained whatever might be the danger, and he asked Yariko to remain while he went hunting, to which she agreed, promising to retire to the inner cave at the least sign of danger.

Taking his bow and arrows in one hand and the cutlass in the other, he cautiously went forth, with eyes and ears open and on the alert. There was no sign of the enemy, and although he looked into every bush and covert for the double purpose of finding game or marks of the human reptile, nothing rewarded his search for a long time. Passing down towards what had been their home until yesterday, he at last came in sight of the shed, or rather of the place

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where it had been, for it existed no longer. Peeping from behind a boulder he saw that the place was vacant, and one or two blackened sticks indicated that it had been burnt.

They must have escaped just at the right moment, for the kenaima would certainly have killed them if they had gone home. Where was he now? Perhaps behind this bush or that rock, watching for the return of his victims. Allan dared not go nearer; he stealthily crept from boulder to boulder, and would not even look for game until at a good distance.

At last he succeeded in shooting a deer, and by afternoon was back in the cavern with the meat. His wife met him at the mouth, and appeared much relieved as he came up the gully. She had already ventured to collect some fuel, and in a few minutes a leg of venison was roasting on the fire.

After enjoying a hearty meal, and placing the remainder of the meat on a rough barbecue to smoke, Allan could think better of the difficulties of their position. He would not disturb Yariko by telling her of the destruction of their late shelter; anything that might startle or

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alarm her must be concealed as long as possible, for she had not yet wholly recovered from her fright. If she gained a little more confidence in their ability to escape there would be less danger ; in any case, they must remain in hiding for the present.

To make their hiding-place more comfortable they collected some dry grass for a bed, and a good supply of fuel and torch-sticks ; they also made a kind of lattice-like door by fastening sticks across each other and tying them up with bush ropes. By fixing this gate tightly behind the heap of stones the tunnel was, he thought, so well secured that they might venture to remain in the outer cave without much risk.

Yariko became more cheerful as their preparations for the night were completed, and it was easily arranged that they should watch by turns during the night, Allan deciding to take the first half, when possibly there might be the greater danger.

Yariko lay down on the bed of grass and Allan sat beside the fire thinking. His mind wandered to the inner cave and the contents of

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the little cairn. What he had felt was certainly metal; he must explore the place on the morrow.

How about the kenaima? The thought of him would intrude itself upon his mind, and make him listen for a footstep or the rattle of a stone. He had heard of men being stalked by lions and tigers, but what was their danger compared with this? A wild beast might follow a man for a few hours ; the camoudi-kenaima never gave up, and if he should be killed another would take his place. Indians from all parts of the interior of Guiana had been injured by Samarang, and therefore no member of the family could be safe in the country. They must try to get down to the coast ; but what could they do without friends? He could not leave Yariko behind to be murdered, yet a "shirt-tailed" white man with a naked Indian woman in Georgetown would attract attention at once. Chloe would find them out, and no doubt make trouble. How could they get away as long as the avenger was on the alert? They were imprisoned, and could only hope to escape by one of the rivers which flowed into the

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Masaruni. A canoe could only be hollowed out at the waterside, and during its construction the avenger would certainly come upon them. Even a wood-skin would take several days to get ready, and how could they shoot the rapids with such a craft? The problem was too difficult, and his mind became confused as he tried to solve it. Yet he would not despair; perhaps some way out of the difficulty might be shown later. He lightly touched Yariko on her shoulder, and sank down on the bed, leaving her on the watch until morning.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DEATH STRUGGLE

LLAN woke to find his breakfast ready. With the sun pouring through the crack above him, and the genial fire to prevent that chilliness which was so distressing the day before, his spirits rose, and he became quite hopeful. His gate and pile of stones had apparently been untouched; and as he need not go hunting for two or three days, the risk from the enemy was staved off for a time.

Now was the opportunity for examining the inner cave. His bundle of torch-sticks was dry, and lighting one, with Yariko following and carrying the others, he again passed through the second tunnel, until, arriving at the cairn, he began his search.

Taking out the layer of rubbish, which appeared to consist of rotten basket-work that at some time or other had been a pegall, he

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brought forth one of the heavy lumps of metal and held it to the light. It was covered with a film of decayed fibres, which, however, was easily rubbed off, to disclose a grotesque human figure in a squatting position, the colour of which was a dead yellow under the torchlight. Placing this on one side, he took up another of the images, on which a small article fell on the stone, giving forth a ring which he seemed to recognise. Picking it up, he saw that it was a pendant in the shape of a half-moon, made of the same yellow metal as the images. Altogether there were about a hundred of these idols, as he supposed they might have been called, and as many of the gold moons. Then came what appeared to be a model dug-out canoe, the wood of which was soft and could be pinched out with the fingers, below which nothing but sand could be felt.

Taking up the last article and two or three samples of the others, he went to the outer cave to examine them in a better light. The idols were certainly gold, as was also the "moons." "Gold moons," he whispered to himself; where had he heard the name before?

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Suddenly, a flood of memories poured into his brain, and he was far away in the past, accompanying Sir Walter Ralegh on his arduous voyage up the Orinoco in search of El Dorado and the city of Manoa, from whence the gold moons had been obtained. Then he also remembered that the unfortunate knight carried about with him a "Guiana gold idol," which was found in his pocket after the unjust execution on Tower Hill.

Yes, here were specimens of the *caricuri* which had led to so much trouble in the past that, as he remembered, the Indians of the whole country had combined together, not only to hide the sources from whence the precious metal was obtained, but to denude themselves of their ornaments, lest the covetous Spaniards should destroy them altogether.

But what was in the little canoe? The cover had once been fastened with bush ropes, but these fell away at his touch. First came a piece of cloth, folded over something, which he opened carefully and spread out on the floor. Although dark brown with age, and so rotten that his fingers went through it as he carefully

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opened out the folds, an almost black cross could still be traced. And these black discs which rolled out, what were they? He took up the end of his ragged shirt and rubbed one of them until a few streaks of white appeared, and the well-known head and bust of Queen Elizabeth could be discerned.

Again the story of Ralegh and his follower Keymis, forced itself upon the mind of Allan. The portraits of the "Great Princess of the North," given to the chiefs in the shape of silver shillings, were before him, and here was an English flag which no doubt had been left by one of these voyagers. The chiefs must have hidden them with the gold when Ralegh failed to return, and possibly ordered that the place of their concealment should never be divulged, and that the great rock must henceforth be kept sacred.

Although Allan saw no way of utilising this treasure, yet he could not help congratulating himself on the find. If he could get it to Georgetown many of his difficulties would be at an end, but at present all possibility of escape was barred. To carry two hundred

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pounds of gold, for his rough estimate made it fully as much as that, would only be possible with a good canoe and the assistance of others; he and Yariko, in peril of their lives, must think of something else.

Folding up the coins and placing them again in the casket, he lit another torch, and almost lovingly took the whole back to their cairn. Having plenty of time on his hands, he now explored the cave a little farther, but found no more evidences of its having been used by man. It had evidently been excavated by water, which trickled down at many places in the farther end, from cracks in the sandstone, to form the little stream which flowed through both caverns. Here and there stood forth great boulders, some looming up in the shadows like human figures, others similar to the "cheese-wrings" found in some parts of England. It was undoubtedly an excellent place of refuge, but if the kenaima guarded the entrance they could only die of starvation.

When their supply of meat was finished, Allan was again compelled to go forth, however great the risk. As before, he was

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particularly cautious, in some places crawling on his hands and knees across open spaces, and everywhere keeping under cover as much as possible. But when nothing occurred to arouse his suspicions, he gained more confidence and commenced his search for game.

As usual, this took up a great deal of time, for even birds were scarce in the district. As he got down into the valley, however, he caught sight of a bush - fowl, perched upon a low, gnarled tree. Sticking his cutlass into the ground to draw his bow, he prepared to fix an arrow, when, looking over his shoulder, a slight motion in the tall sedges behind made him pause. Dropping the bow and arrows, he snatched up the cutlass, but before he could turn round a heavy form bore him to earth, and a strong pair of arms were clasped round his neck. He struck wildly at one of the arms, however, before it closed, and a jet of blood spurted into his face. This was all he remembered, for his brain became confused, sparks came into his eyes, his breath stopped, and an almost pleasant oblivion ensued.

He awoke to consciousness with a feeling of

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suffocation. A heavy weight was upon him, and his limbs and body were so cramped and dead that he could not throw it off. His throat was so constricted that he could hardly breathe, his tongue dry and hanging from his mouth. He seemed to be in a bath of blood, the smell of which was overpowering. He tried to cry out for water, but could utter no sound.

It seemed as if hours passed before he could turn over a little, and even then the constriction of his neck continued. With a supreme effort he untwined the pair of sinewy arms from his throat, and lay panting and exhausted beside the corpse of his enemy. For the kenaima was quite dead and stiff; the cutlass had accidentally struck one of the few places where an artery could be severed, and the strangler bled to death before he could fully accomplish his purpose.

Night had fallen, and a chilly wind blew over the open place, yet Allan burned with fever. Feeling that the grasses were wet with dew, he clutched those which rose near to him and drew them across his parched lips, at the same time recoiling in horror as he got a

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taste of what seemed to pollute the air around him.

Again he became half-conscious ; a horrible nightmare oppressed him. Monstrous pythons were strangling him, but their heads were human. He struggled to free himself, but the coils tightened more and more. He gasped for breath and tried to raise his hands to pull them from his throat, but his arms were powerless. Then the scene changed ; he was in the midst of a great fire which hemmed him on every side. His limbs were scorched, and hot air like that of a furnace burnt his mouth and set fire to his lungs. He struggled to get away, but could not move for a long time. Hours seemed to have passed before his cramped legs would perform their office, but at last, with a mighty effort he cried out "Help! Water!" and woke to find himself tottering on his feet.

Instinctively he dragged his limbs in the direction from which the rippling of a stream could be heard. It was very near, yet he stumbled and fell several times before he could reach it. Vainly did he try to cool his parched

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lips with the dewy grasses ; he must have had a long drink, for he was on fire.

At last he reached the bank and rolled himself into the shallow stream, lapping the water like a dog. But he almost fainted with pain as the cold liquid entered his throat. He could not swallow on account of the constriction, and again his mind wandered. This time he was up to his neck in water, like Tantalus, and vainly tried to obtain a sip. In his agony he rolled over in the shallow stream, and would probably have been suffocated had not his "ministering angel" appeared.

Yariko had been alarmed at his non-appearance before nightfall, and had come forth to seek him. In the darkness of the night, without the slightest indication as to the direction of his wanderings, she had found him. Leading him to the bank, she stroked his limbs, felt his throat, and with her delicate touch discovered that it was swollen, but that otherwise he was unhurt.

Dawn now appeared, and she gathered some leaves, which she chewed to make a poultice, with the result he could soon swallow a little

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water. Then the burning heat was followed by chills, and Yariko half led, half dragged him to a sheltered place under a rock, and made him a bed. Finally, she lit a fire and fixed up a kind of lean-to with palm branches.

As the pain in his throat decreased and he could swallow as much water as he required, a dreamy feeling of relief from intense agony made him almost happy. The kenaima was dead, and that alone was a blessing. As Yariko tied a cool leaf over his brow and renewed the dressing for his neck, all the love within him glowed, and he lifted up his hands to her. For the first time she kissed his lips, and then drew back as if it were something so strange as to be almost wrong. Then he fell into a dreamless sleep, from which he did not wake until the afternoon.

Since the morning of the previous day he had eaten nothing, and now that his fever had gone he craved for food. He was very hungry, and the smell of cooked meat which appeared to be floating round him brought this forcibly to his mind. He turned over towards the fire, and was much pleased to see Yariko busy cook-

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ing a bird she had shot. It was ready as he awoke, and although difficult to swallow at first, Allan managed to eat a little, and felt correspondingly refreshed. Beside her lay his bow and arrows, as well as the cutlass, so she must have found them near the corpse and gone shooting while he lay asleep. She smiled upon him as he asked her about the matter, but said nothing of the dead kenaima ; Allan did not remind her, but he could see that she was relieved. No longer was that hunted look upon her face ; no longer did she look furtively over her shoulders as she walked about. Their enemy was dead, and there the corpse must lie for the ants to clean, until nothing but a bare skeleton remained.

Now he must make an effort to get home, for rain might fall at night, and their shelter was but a poor one. He got upon his feet, but could not stand without assistance. However, with Yariko's help he moved onward, every step tending to make his joints more supple, yet, at the same time, causing him great pain.

How he got over that two miles he hardly knew. Boulders, loose stones, tangled thickets,

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and long grass obstructed their progress ; now they were slipping down into a valley, and anon climbing a steep mound. In the better part of the journey Allan had only an indistinct remembrance of being hoisted upon his wife's back with his arms clasped over her forehead.

At last they arrived at the descent into the ravine, and here Yariko let him carefully down with a bush rope, but he was quite unconscious, and only learnt what she had done when he recovered. Finally, she half led, half carried him into the cave and placed him on the bed.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FLIGHT FROM RORAIMA

ALLAN woke to find the light of morning illuminating their retreat, a fire blazing, and his wife lying beside him with her arms over his shoulders. A pleasant warmth pervaded his frame, and he found on trying to move that only a little stiffness remained. To remove this, Yariko tried friction, and that kneading of the muscles so well known among savage natives in different parts of the world. With this, and a little exercise within the cave, he felt much better, but still too weak to go hunting. This troubled him, but his wife said nothing ; she examined the dark line round his neck, dressed it, and, taking up the bow and arrows, left him alone. She knew what was wanted, and for the present must play the man.

What must they do? thought Allan, as he

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sat down waiting for his wife's return. Now that the kenaima was dead, they might venture to move towards the river, and there in the inner cave were the means of living in comfort when they got to Georgetown. Whatever happened, he could not part with Yariko ; she had nursed him in his fever, had saved his life the day before, and now, contrary to all her ideas of woman's duties, had gone hunting. He hoped she would be successful, for, like most convalescents, he had an eager longing for food, and then, without something to eat, he would never be strong enough to hunt or travel.

As soon as he recovered they must get away, for if the Arecunas found that the first kenaima was dead they would send out another ; in fact, all the relations of the man he had killed would be bound to avenge his death. Perhaps it would be better to hide the body under a heap of stones ; he must see to that before leaving. How much of the treasure could they carry ? But very little, for he could not burden his wife with a heavy load, and it was quite certain that she would not allow him to carry anything. He

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must be free to hunt, and whatever was taken would necessarily have to go upon her back. He thought of the painful travelling across the savannah, and the dark line across her forehead where the band had pressed so cruelly. No, he could not put fifty or sixty pounds of metal in a suriana, although he knew she would willingly carry such an amount; he must be satisfied with about half, say twenty-five pounds. This, if it turned out to be pure metal, without much silver, would realise at least a thousand pounds sterling. But he had read of such images being found in Central America where the gold was much alloyed with copper; this would reduce the value. On the other hand, collectors and museums might pay more. Whatever was the result, there would be enough to pay their passage to Scotland and put him in the way of opening a business. He must get away as soon as possible, for the Indians might follow him to Georgetown. Then there was Chloe.

Ah Chloe! What a painful train of questions that name evoked! What had become of her? Where was their child? He had now two

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wives, one bound to him by law, the other by love and duty. Which had the stronger claim upon him hardly admitted of a question. And what could he do with Yariko? Could he take her to his mother's home and introduce her as Mrs. Gordon? He had already informed his people in Scotland of his marriage with the boviander, and what would they say to this second connection? He would certainly marry Yariko when Chloe died, meanwhile the straight-laced would hold up their hands in horror. Did he then wish for the death of his legal wife? Certainly; for as long as she lived she stood in the way of his happiness.

His train of thought was broken by the re-appearance of Yariko, who brought a labba she had killed. Coming in so immediately after his thoughts had been directed to her, his feelings overcame him. He drew her to his weak arms, hugged her to his bosom, and showered kisses upon her until she became frightened. He called her by all the endearing names he could mention, and finished by praising her skill in hunting. She must, however, take great care of herself, he said, for

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the very thought of anything happening to her was painful.

She disengaged herself from his embrace and commenced her cooking, Allan watching her every movement. Notwithstanding her painful experiences and labours during the previous week, her beauty was unimpaired. Were it not for that unfortunate tattooed line above the mouth, she would pass anywhere as a Spanish lady, for he had seen females of that nationality quite as dark in colour. It was a small matter, yet it would, he felt sure, be a great drawback in any civilised country.

As she came in she had slyly handed him a little parcel formed of leaves and tied round with a bush rope. He opened it and found about a pint of blackberries. She had seen how pleased he was at finding the fruit, and had therefore brought some home. Nothing could have been more gratifying than this piece of thoughtfulness, and he thanked her with another kiss. If there had been any one thing he would have wished more than another, it was some acid fruit that would melt in the mouth and soothe that uneasy feeling he still

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had in the throat. The craving for fruit was upon him—that craving which cold water alone could not satisfy, and which in the tropics is felt at some time or other by every one, even those who at ordinary times prefer something more substantial.

As he finished eating the blackberries the meat was ready, and he enjoyed it all the more from his throat having been lubricated as it were beforehand. His wife proposed another dressing for his neck, and he went over to a little pool to see how it looked. The water reflected a very haggard face, with unkempt hair and beard, and round the neck a black line. His woollen shirt was dirty and ragged, and the exposed portions of his skin almost as brown as that of his wife, but certainly not so pleasant to look upon.

Who could recognise this figure as that of Allan Gordon? He left Georgetown a year ago as handsome a young man as could be seen in Water Street; now he had become a savage. How was it that he looked upon himself as ugly when the Indians never struck him in the same light? He supposed it must

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be a want of congruity ; the Indians were as they should be ; he was out of his element.

But he would dismiss every anxious thought for the present, and be happy while he could. The mental and bodily strain was over for a time at least ; the incubus of terror gone, as he hoped, for ever. “Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.” All their immediate wants were supplied—a good shelter from the wind and rain, a fire, and a bed. They could now be comfortable without troubling themselves about the entrance. They sat quietly down on their couch of leaves during the day, and when night came lay in peace and slept till morning.

After breakfast Allan, feeling almost well, now began to discuss their position with his wife ; but there was only one talker, for Yariko, as usual, agreed with everything he said, as became a dutiful Indian wife. It would not do for them to remain long in the neighbourhood, for there was no possibility of settling down anywhere in the interior ; they would have to reach the coast. He must take about twenty-five pounds weight of the

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treasure, with the proceeds of which they would be able to obtain the means of crossing the great water.

At once she saw what was wanted, and almost immediately took the cutlass and went in search of flexible bush ropes for a suriana. Of course she would make the basket and carry the load ; her man would have enough to do in procuring food. In her opinion she had been quite lazy since there had been no cassava to plant and no bread to make. She would even make another pair of hammocks in place of those left in their former home down in the valley ; they could not rest on the wet and often flooded ground on the bank of the river.

In about an hour she came back with quite a load upon her back, steadied as usual by the band across the forehead. The afternoon was spent by Allan in watching her deft fingers weaving the open basket, the material of which he split to suit her purpose. Before night fell she had finished.

Next morning the more tedious work of netting hammocks was commenced. Without

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proper material these were necessarily but makeshifts ; yet Allan felt that they could not commence their journey without them. As he felt so much better, he took his bow and arrows and went forth in the hope of getting a few birds, as the labba had almost been consumed, and in this he succeeded without tiring himself too much.

Several days passed before the hammocks were ready, and on one of these Allan visited the place where he had encountered the kenaima. Several carrion crows flapped their wings as he approached, hopped away for a few yards, but did not fly. He could not go very near, but standing a few yards off he picked up one flat stone after another and threw it upon the remains until they were completely hidden.

The netting having at last been completed, nothing remained but to pack the treasure. Each image and gold moon was carefully tied up in leaves and fastened with slender bush ropes, after which they were placed in the suriana, together with the rotten flag and Elizabethan coins. When Yariko saw how

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little space they took she wanted him to allow her to carry more, but this he would not permit. The remainder of the suriana was filled with their hammocks and a few pieces of barbecued meat; even this was a heavier load than he liked her to carry, but he knew she would refuse to let him reduce the burden.

Looking round upon the cavern almost with regret—for he knew that they could hardly be so comfortable and safe for weeks and perhaps months to come—he took up his weapons and left, followed by Yariko with her load.

It was morning, and the sun shone brightly upon the wall of Roraima as they turned their backs and went in a north-easterly direction, to strike one of the numerous streams which take their rise in the neighbourhood. Before them lay a long journey of over three hundred miles, through one of the most dangerous rivers of the country; but as there was no other course left, he would do his best and hope to be successful.

Towards evening they slung their hammocks in one of the pleasant valleys, and in the morn-

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ing again started. A week passed before they arrived at the stream ; for although it took its rise on the slope from which they had come, and perhaps received the waters which issued from the cave, it could not be navigated in any way higher up. Even here it was obstructed by rocks and broken by falls, and they had to proceed for several miles along its banks before they arrived at comparatively still water.

Here they would have to remain for several days, while Allan searched for a purple-heart tree, from which the bark might be peeled to make a wood-skin canoe. A shelter was therefore put up between two rocks, and under it they were fairly comfortable while the arduous work was carried on.

For it was by no means easy for one man to peel a slice of bark fourteen feet by six and bring it into the proper shape. Allan was a novice at such work, and had to get the assistance of his wife from the very commencement. When an Indian makes such a canoe he does it leisurely, often taking several weeks ; they must hurry as fast as possible.

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After a long search Allan found a suitable tree not too far from the bank of the river, close to which he erected a staging, twenty feet high, on which to work; for on account of buttresses the bark near the ground was unsuitable. Then came the cutting of the lines, which took up a whole day, and finally the peeling, which was done by means of levers of hard wood. At intervals he had to go hunting, but Yariko helped in procuring food by fishing; yet their provision supply was very poor, and they often went to their hammocks without dinner.

However, the canoe was finished at last and dragged to the bank. Would it float? Allan had his doubts, which were confirmed when they shoved it into the water. It was lopsided, and the water poured gently over the lowest part until it sank. Drawing it to shore again by the tough bush rope which served as a "painter," he commenced the difficult work of shaping it above a smoky fire.

This took up several days, but at last it was finished, and on a further trial the canoe floated. With a little care in balancing they

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found it would carry them very well in smooth water ; when they came to the rapids it would have to be drawn overland.

A day's hunting and fishing gave them provisions for a short time, and finally, taking their places and the paddles which had been got ready, Allan loosened the bush rope and let his frail craft float downward.

Not the least sign of an Indian having been perceived during their long delay, Allan ventured to hope that the death of the kenaima was as yet unknown, and that therefore they would not be pursued.

Starting early in the morning, they made good progress for a short time. The stream ran so swiftly that no paddling was required ; but on account of the rocks which stood up here and there the utmost care in steering became necessary. Now and again a little water splashed over the side of the canoe, but Yariko steered so carefully that Allan became confident in its stability.

Early in the afternoon the distant roaring of a fall was heard. The river flowed more and more swiftly, and they crept alongside the

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bushes for fear of being carried too near. Presently a gorge appeared in front; they must get out before being sucked between perpendicular rocks. Tying up the wood-skin very carefully, they got out and proceeded in the direction of the fall, the roar of which was now so deafening that they could hardly hear each other speak. Over rocks and boulders, where there was scarcely a patch of even ground, they wearily toiled for nearly a mile. As they walked on the edge of the cliff the rushing torrent below could be seen rushing along, until it fell over in a magnificent cascade a hundred feet high. Below, the water was churned into froth, and for a hundred yards beyond the pool the turmoil was so great that the strongest boat would have been broken to pieces.

Here was a great check, but they must overcome it. It was too late in the day for them to begin the arduous work of dragging their craft over the rocks, but they took care to put it in safety by hauling it out of the water. Then, secreting the treasure until the voyage could be resumed, they slung their hammocks

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among the trees and tried to sleep. At first the roar made rest impossible, but as hour after hour passed it became monotonous and had the opposite effect.

Three days more passed before the canoe was again launched. The labour of dragging it was enormous, and would have been impossible to accomplish had they not made a wide circuit to avoid the rocks. However, they were safely over at last, and again floating downward. All went well for a few hours, but then came a rapid, above which they took out their precious suriana, and then let the wood-skin down as slowly as possible, by holding it with a long bush rope. As the rough cord was played out they scrambled from rock to rock, but even then their hands were blistered, and Yariko could hardly hold her paddle as they again went on.

CHAPTER XVIII

ARRIVED AT ARANAMA

DAY after day and week after week passed, to see them still risking their lives in the midst of the long chain of rapids which follow each other through the whole course of the Masaruni. With such a craft, which is only fitted for still waters, it would have been considered madness, even by Indians, to attempt such a journey. Although they kept close to the banks, there were many causes for anxiety, and a continual loading and unloading of that valuable basket, which was so important to their future welfare. Several times the canoe broke away as they let it down empty, and could only be recovered by swimming. Once it was dashed against a rock and sunk, to be found again with a long crack, which had to be caulked with a piece of Allan's shirt.

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Time was lost in the search for food, and many a day passed without their having anything to eat. The rainy season came on, and then they often had to run their craft ashore for fear it should be swamped by the deluge from above. Days were spent in hunting on the banks or standing about the rapids looking for fish. One day they would be engaged in descending a rapid, the next perhaps paddling through some side channel in the bush to avoid another. Game and fish were scarce, as they usually are during the floods ; it followed therefore that half their time was spent in avoiding death from hunger, while the remainder passed in peril of drowning.

Few Indians were to be seen on the river, and at the sight of a canoe Yariko ran their wood-skin into the bushes. One party which they could not avoid inquired who the white man was, but they took no notice and passed on. Allan feared the Indians might follow, but as they were busily engaged pulling against the strong current of the river, and possibly knew little or nothing of the Samarang business, they took no further notice.

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Three months after leaving the slopes of Roraima, a haggard-looking white man, whose race could only be distinguished by his long beard and brown hair, and a naked Macusi woman arrived one afternoon at Aranama. For the first time in many months Allan looked at his ragged shirt and began to feel ashamed ; he also noticed that Yariko's pretty bead apron was torn. They paddled slowly along, for he did not wish to arrive before nightfall, and the wood-skin was kept close to the bushes to escape observation. Fortunately they were not starving, and he therefore had no reason to go begging for a meal.

Here at last they were at the outskirts of civilisation, but he did not know whether to be glad or sorry. They had escaped innumerable dangers, and had arrived at the goal of their wishes, to find a thousand minor difficulties awaiting them. As long as they were in the forest and on the river, a ragged shirt and a frayed queyu were not worth thinking about ; at this Mission village a naked white man would attract attention. True, the people were accustomed to see naked Indians every day, but

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even the bovianders were never in such a disreputable condition as he.

As night fell they drew up at the old benab where over a year previous he had met the party of Macusis, and he was pleased to find it vacant. Placing the precious suriana in the centre, Yariko went to the place where some blackened logs showed that the fire was usually lit and prepared the evening meal of a piece of water-haas that had been barbecued the day before. Then they slung their hammocks to the rafters, hoping to have a good night's rest in such a comfortable shed.

But Allan could not sleep. Truly, he had much to be thankful for ; why, then, be so full of anxiety for the future ? He had recovered from a deadly fever, escaped from the cruel embrace of the kenaima, had often obtained food when on the verge of starvation, and had performed the unheard-of feat of descending the Masaruni in a wood-skin. Why, then, be anxious ? He had a good wife, and, save for the effects of the arduous journey, was strong and in good health ; above all, he was in possession of sufficient gold to make his future position far from precarious.

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What should he do next ; how obtain something to cover his nakedness ? And then there was his wife. Would he like to see her walking through the streets of Georgetown in a queyu ? As long as they were in the bush it did not matter, but they must not remain here, for even at the Mission there would be no safety. He remembered hearing of a former missionary at this very place having been poisoned by an Indian whom he had offended. Until they got away they would still be in danger ; perhaps on the morrow a party might arrive to again put them in the position of hunted animals. How could he dispose of enough gold to supply his immediate wants ? The missionary would ask questions if he showed him even one of the idols. He was rich, but so much the worse off, for he could not realise the value of his riches. His path was as dark as the night ; perhaps the rising sun would show him the way.

When he awoke it was morning, and Yariko was already cooking the last of their meat. As he had no clothes to put on he jumped up, gave a look round as he had been in the habit of

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doing for so long, and went down to the river. Here he washed himself and endeavoured to comb out his long hair and beard with his ragged finger-nails, smoothing them as best he could. Having thus paid as much attention as possible to his toilet, he went in to breakfast.

While they were quietly eating with their fingers; which Allan now began to think somewhat disgusting, a stranger appeared at one end of the benab, and stood watching them unperceived for a few minutes. Allan, hearing a slight cough behind him, turned round to see a black-coated personage, who could only be the Reverend John Gatward, of whom he had heard when in Georgetown.

The parson was making his usual round and had looked in to see if there were any new arrivals. The benab was the property of the Mission, and had been put up for the accommodation of visitors, to whom the reverend gentleman always endeavoured to speak "a word in season."

Allan turned his face away as he saw a respectably dressed gentleman looking at him as if shocked. For the parson was indeed

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shocked at seeing the pair ; a man apparently white, naked save for a ragged shirt, which appeared almost black with dirt and age, and a tattooed Macusi woman in nothing but a queyu. He held up his hands in amazement. The impertinence of the wretch ! Such a thing was a disgrace to the Mission.

“ How dare you bring a scandal upon my people by carrying on your intrigue in this place ? You, a white man, ought to be ashamed of yourself ! Yes ; you may well hide your head and draw your naked legs into your hammock. This benab is reserved for respectable Indians, not disreputable characters.”

“ But,” replied Allan in a low voice, “ this Indian woman is my wife. We have been married almost a year. She has been exceedingly kind and faithful ; she nursed me in fever and saved my life on several occasions. I would not part with her for the world.”

“ Then, of course, you want to be legally married ? ” said the parson, as his face cleared and a benevolent smile took the place of the indignant rebuke. “ Very well ; you may stay,

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and I shall be very glad to put up the banns at once."

Allan was disconcerted at this unlooked-for reply. He knew not how to answer without giving offence, and that he could not afford to do. For, after all, marrying would have been the very thing if his position had been otherwise. But he had no reason to suppose that he was free to marry, and he certainly would not commit bigamy. What could he say? He must temporise for the present; perhaps something would occur to extricate him from the difficulty. The parson was smiling and patiently awaiting his answer.

"I am quite willing to marry her," said Allan, "if I may do so, but at present we are quite destitute; how can we live here for two or three weeks?"

"Well, look here! As long as you are going to do the right thing, I will see after that. Put your intended under my wife's care until the marriage takes place; she will be made a little decent and I will look and see if I can't find something to cover your own nakedness. Why, my poor man, even the

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Mission Indians would be ashamed to have you among them in that state."

Allan looked down upon his ragged shirt, and the kind parson saw that he was touched.

"That's right," he continued, "I am glad you see that it is shameful. Of course it would be different with a party of Indians in nothing but their laps, but, although your skin is brown enough, no one would take you for a red man. That long beard and your brown hair proclaim your race at once. If I mistake not, you are Scotch ; what would your friends think of you if they saw your condition ? "

Poor Allan felt the force of every word spoken by the reverend gentleman ; they reflected his own thoughts. But what could he do ? He wanted to be respectable, and would take the first opportunity of getting a suit of decent clothing. But here was no place where he could dispose of one of his images, and he thought it best to say nothing of what lay on the ground close to his feet.

During this discussion Yariko sat on the edge of her hammock, listening, but unable to understand a word. The parson now advanced

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and took her hand, telling her in a kindly tone and in her own language to come with him.

She was frightened, and snatching away her hand took refuge behind her husband.

"Let me speak to her alone for a few moments," said Allan; "she is afraid you want to part us altogether."

The parson retired outside the benab, and Allan explained to Yariko what was intended, enjoining her at the same time not to say anything of the contents of the suriana. The lady would be very kind to her, and he would always be near at hand. Perhaps, however, it might be necessary for him to go away for a short time; if so, he would explain the whole matter when his plans were settled. She must obey the clergyman's wife as she would him, and they would soon be again united.

She hesitated for a few minutes, but finally, with a downcast look, untied her hammock and followed the parson.

For the first time since their marriage the pair were separated, and Allan felt as if he was indeed alone. No longer would he be able to

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watch her preparing his meals ; no more would they be able to work together as formerly. His "helpmeet" had gone ; this was the first result of contact with civilisation ; what would be the next ? The good intentions of Parson Gatward had placed him in a dilemma from which he could only extricate himself with very great difficulty. True, his position was altered from that of the previous night, and his shame would soon be covered. He could not marry while the old connection existed ; perhaps, however, Chloe might be dead. Many things could have happened within a year. But he knew very well that his wish was parent to the thought ; he had passed through great dangers and still survived, why should she have been less fortunate ? Nevertheless, he must get to Georgetown in some way or other, and it would be better if he went alone. With Yariko safe and in good hands half the difficulty was removed.

His reverie was broken by the appearance of a decently-clad Indian woman, who handed him a bundle, at the same time giving him a verbal message that Parson Gatward would

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like to see him at the Mission house when he had dressed.

In the parcel was a faded black suit, a white shirt, a comb, looking-glass, and a pair of scissors. Allan eyed these articles with mixed feelings ; he had become so accustomed to the freedom of the natural man that he hesitated. However, he must now bid farewell to the old savage life, with its pleasures and pains, and once more follow the customs of his own people. He took a bath in the river, trimmed his hair and beard in the best way he could, and hung the clothes upon him, for he could hardly wear them.

Parson Gatward was a portly gentleman, and his cast-off suit was far from becoming to a man who was lank and wiry from the effects of starvation, pain, and worry. As Allan surveyed himself in the little mirror he smiled. If he had wanted a disguise this certainly was one; why, Yariko would hardly know him. Yet, at the same time he could not but be thankful for the parson's kindness to a stranger. He had once been rather particular about his dress ; what did it matter now ?

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Before leaving the benab he looked at the suriana in some doubt as to its being safe to leave it, but as any attempt to hide it would look suspicious he let it lie under the hammock and proceeded to the Mission house.

CHAPTER XIX

AT THE MISSION HOUSE

PARSON GATWARD'S cottage was a very comfortable home, but Allan did not feel at ease within it. Unaccustomed to clothes and to sitting on a chair for such a long time, it could not be expected that he would immediately feel comfortable, but he certainly might have felt better in a proper fit.

The missionary complimented him, however, on his improved appearance as he came up the steps, and pleasantly remarked that there were now two wearers of the cloth at Aranama. He asked Allan a multitude of questions, but as they came out so quickly one after another our hero was enabled to evade the greater number and vaguely answer the others. It went against his conscience to tell the kind gentleman so many white lies, but what could he do? Even his name might recall the story of a clerk who had run away from his wife and his creditors a

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year before, for a tit-bit of scandal travels very far in British Guiana.

His name was, therefore, John Guthrie, and he had gone to Roraima in search of natural history specimens, all of which had been lost, when his boat was upset at one of the rapids. His paddlers had deserted him and his wife, and the pair had therefore to come down as best they could. In Georgetown he had one or two acquaintances from whom he might get assistance on personal application, but unless he risked his life by travelling close to the banks of the river, and along the west coast in the wood-skin, he knew not how to get there, for he could not go by steamer without money. He certainly wished to be legally united to the woman who had been so kind to him, but nevertheless, as was only natural, he did not like to trespass upon the kindness of Mr. Gatward. If he could only go to town and come back for the wedding, it would be more comfortable for all parties.

The reverend gentleman smiled and looked roguishly at him as he heard the last sentence.

"Oh, oh! I see! It is the old story. You

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want an opportunity for deserting the poor girl, do you? Of course, that is always the way. You took advantage of her ignorance ; she saved your life, as you admit ; but you cannot show a Macusi wife to your friends. No doubt you are right from a worldly point of view, but we must look upon our obligations in a different light from that. I am sorry for you, but, as a priest of the English Church, must discountenance anything of the sort."

Allan protested that he had not the slightest intention of deserting Yariko ; on the contrary, even this partial separation for a few days was painful. Rather than be misjudged in that way, he would strip himself and go down the river with her in the wood-skin. The waves of the Essequebo could not be more dangerous than the rapids of the Masaruni ; possibly some one in the lower settlements might help them.

The parson shook his head, and pointed to the broad estuary before them. Its surface was broken by the soft wind which was so pleasantly cool as they sat in the gallery, but even these tiny waves would lap over the sides of a wood-skin and swamp it.

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“No, no! To cross over, except perhaps at night, would be madness. How you escaped the dangers of the Masaruni in such a craft is wonderful. You must thank God that your body is not now lying among the rocks to feed the perai. No, my poor fellow, I don’t intend to have your murder upon my conscience. I suppose I can trust you not to wrong the poor woman, who, my wife says, looks miserable and wants to throw off her frock to return to the benab. The steamer will be here on her monthly trip the day after to-morrow ; I will lend you the amount of your passage. But I am afraid your late companion will be running after you if you wait a whole month, and then the wedding will be delayed.”

Allan thanked him for his kindness, and said that a few words from him would reconcile Yariko to his absence, after which Mr. Gatward introduced him to the mistress of the house, and they went to lunch.

After so long a deprivation from tables and chairs, knives and forks, and in fact every comfort of a civilised home, Allan felt somewhat embarrassed. For months he had hardly

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been sure of a meal at any time, and the change was very grateful. On the table was a piece of corned beef ; his mouth watered at the sight, for one of his greatest deprivations had been the want of salt. Sometimes he had powdered the tasteless fish and game with wood ashes ; only hunger could make it palatable. The meal was delicious. For a whole year he had tasted no wheaten bread, and the orange and slice of pineapple were peculiarly grateful. After all, the long picnic, which he had once thought would be so delightful, was but a poor substitute for home comforts.

But he did not see Yariko. His eyes wandered about in the hope of catching sight of her through one of the open doorways. Without her, his feeling of gratification was marred, but he could say nothing. Even the kind parson could not sit down at table with an Indian ; here was another result of contact with civilisation. Why should she be excluded from his presence ? Yet he knew it could not be otherwise.

Lunch over, he left the house, although he was told to make himself at home. He would

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not trespass on the kindness of these good people more than he could help, for he felt himself to be an impostor and a cheat. Then, again, he must see that his treasure was safe, for though Indians would not be likely to interfere with the suriana, some of the bovianders from the neighbourhood would not be so scrupulous. However, the benab was still vacant and everything remained as he had left it.

In virtue of his assumed character he thought it well to fill the suriana with orchids, of which several species grew on the banks of the river. Going along the shore through a narrow path, he made a careful exploration of the neighbourhood, as it might be necessary to get to the Mission without being seen. He had naturally been thinking of a way out of the difficulty of the wedding, and in this connection he must find out some secluded landing-place.

Having seen that the path terminated in an opening on the river Essequebo, he gathered an armful of *Diacrium bicornutum* and returned. Then, taking out two of the gold moons to present to Mr. Gatward, he packed

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the orchids tightly above the remainder of the gold, feeling sure that no one would now interfere with the basket of weeds.

It was dinner-time when he got back to the benab, and he went again to the Mission house, where he found his kind host more genial if possible than before. Over their coffee they had a chat, in the course of which the parson told Allan of his difficulties in converting the Indians. Very few would settle down at the Mission, because the neighbourhood gave them such a poor hunting ground, and even the fishing was poor as compared with the upper rivers. They could not live on cassava bread alone, and although they often kept domestic fowls, no Indian would eat those he had bred and cared for himself.

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Then there were other difficulties. Many wanted to be baptized who had not the slightest intention of changing their manners and customs. There was a Peaiman named Samarang, a very influential chief, who at one time appeared to be most promising. He knew a little English, and could have brought quite a large body of followers. But he had three wives, and Mr.

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Gatward had told him that the Church would not admit polygamy. "What then," said Samarang, "shall I do?" The parson replied that the one he had married first was his only wife in the eyes of Makunaima. But—and the parson sighed as he thought of the great loss to the Mission—Samarang would part with neither of the three, for he said they were necessary to his comfort and position. If he had only one wife he would be looked upon with contempt as a common man; everybody would despise him. With a provision ground no bigger than those of his people, and with no larger supply of cassava bread, how could he ever entertain his followers; where find bread to make piwarrie?

"And how did you settle the matter after all?" inquired Allan, thinking of his own experiences.

The parson sighed and shook his head.

"It never was settled. The Church would not permit me to baptize a trigamist, and the chief would not part with either of his wives. It was a sad loss, for Samarang would have been exceedingly useful, because he could

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easily have learnt to read. But what other course could I take? You know, I suppose, that the Church is very strict in such cases? I suppose you are a Presbyterian, Mr. Guthrie?"

Allan hardly knew how to answer the last question. He had certainly been brought up to the Kirk, but his religious notions had been quite upset since his arrival in Demerara. Here he had certainly found a parade of church-going among all classes, but the curious thing about it all was that morality seemed to be at a discount. Even Chloe had been highly religious in her way ; but he had noticed in her case, as well as in others with which he had become acquainted, that their attendance at church very largely rested upon new dresses and hats. If the parson only knew what a ne'er-do-well he was talking to, he would probably turn him out at once.

The conversation having become personal, Allan turned it off into other channels. He had been out of the world, as it were, for over a twelvemonth, and knew nothing of what had happened during the interval. England, the

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parson said, was through another of her little difficulties, but there were rumours of an impending war, in which it was expected that several of the Great Powers would be implicated. The Demerara planters had been, as usual, crying out about the low price of sugar and the scarcity of labour, but nevertheless, although on the brink of ruin, they were still pretty comfortable. As for Mr. Gatward, he did not trouble himself much about such things; all his interest lay in the work of his Mission, but even in this he was hampered by the want of means.

The parson seemed glad to have a white man as visitor, for no doubt the Indians were but poor company. He rambled on from one subject to another, but always came back to his work and its difficulties. Allan made a very good listener, but all the time he was thinking of Yariko and of how he could ask after her without giving offence. At last he plucked up enough courage to say he would like to see his wife before going back to the benab.

The parson shook his finger at him, but he was too good-natured to refuse. In his opinion,

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the pair had been leading sinful lives, and should be kept apart until the marriage. She ought to remain strictly alone until her lover came back from Georgetown and was ready to have their illicit connection hallowed by the Church. However, he told his servant to call her.

Allan hardly recognised his wife in the long gown in which she appeared, and she seemed frightened as her eyes fell upon the baggy clothes he wore. Both were uncomfortable and ill-at-ease in the presence of Mr. Gatward, and he, seeing this, made an excuse to retire for a few moments.

Yariko now drew up the skirts of her long robe and came forward, every step being taken as if she feared to stumble and fall. They mutually surveyed each other; she astonished and confused, he embarrassed by the difficulty of explaining what he wanted to do. For he knew not what might happen to him in Georgetown, and hardly dared to tell her that he was going there alone.

At last she spoke, asking him when they would be going away; Mrs. Gatward was

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very kind, but she wanted to be free from this long dress, in which she could neither walk properly nor help in the work of the kitchen. The lady was very kind, but what did they want with such people; why should they not go somewhere in the forest, where their enemies could not find them?

Allan soothed her as best he could, but she trembled when he said he must go away and leave her alone. What could she do? If he deserted her she would die. Besides, the Macusis visited Aranama sometimes, and if they came she must hide in the bush.

He said she must not run away, for then he would not find her on his return. He would come back as soon as he could; she must listen every evening for the call of the goat-sucker, and then come out to meet him. At last she became quiet and submissive as usual, promising to remain until she heard the "Who are you?" which she hoped would not be long.

As he lay in his hammock he thought over the change in his prospects since the previous evening. Then he could see no way of getting

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to Georgetown without the risk of discovery and the almost certainty of attracting attention ; now he would be in a manner quite respectable. Certainly no one would recognise Allan Gordon in the clerical suit of Parson Gatward, although, for the sake of comfort, he wished it had been less hampering to his movements. However, he must make the best of it and be thankful. Hitherto he had escaped from trouble, as it appeared, and no doubt he and Yariko would be quite happy when he had realised the value of one of the images and be no longer in the position of a beggar.

(How Allan sold his treasure, and met Chloe, of his fortunate escape from her, and of his further wanderings with Yariko, will be told by the author in a sequel.)



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